

THESE ADIAPHORISTIC DEVILS:  
MATTHIAS FLACIUS ILLYRICUS *IN STATU CONFESSIONIS*, 1548-1552

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## Introduction

The years 1546 and 1547 shook German Lutheranism to its core. Cataclysmic shifts plunged Luther's disciples into a crisis of identity and confession. In the span of fourteen months, the great reformer died and the Schmalkaldic League of evangelical territories and cities suffered a crushing defeat in the Battle of Mühlberg. The grave silenced Luther's prophetic voice. Imperial forces rendered Protestantism's political protectors nearly impotent. Philipp Melanchthon, Luther's treasured colleague and the author of the foundational confession of evangelical Christianity in Germany, the *Augsburg Confession*, found himself the reticent and frightened purported theological head of the German Reformation. Moritz of Saxony now stood as German evangelicalism's most prominent prince, having gained that distinction only recently through what many Lutherans considered blatant treachery. Aligning with the emperor with the promise of a hefty titular and territorial reward, Moritz had attacked his cousin's forces, dividing John Frederick's attention between the imperial forces and his own. The future of the Reformation loomed precariously in the balance and had never seemed darker.

Charles V was determined to seize the window of opportunity afforded him by peace with France and the diminishment of the Turkish threat, as well as the momentum from his decisive victory over the Schmalkaldic League, in order to finally and definitively address the long-festered and unresolved religious question in Germany. That was the purpose of the *Augsburg Interim*, which sought to reintroduce Roman Catholic ceremonies and doctrine with the ultimate aim of a complete reunion of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran territories in Germany under the papacy. The *Interim* was not to take the place of a church council. Rather, the emperor intended it to function as a stopgap measure, template, and impetus for later conciliar reform. The evangelical churches in Germany protested the measures included in the *Interim*

vociferously, and the only meaningful implementation without conflict took place in the southwest of Germany under the threatening watch of Spanish occupying forces, although advances were made elsewhere as well, usually with the employment or serious threat of military force. So confident indeed were the victorious imperial forces that the Cardinal Granvella warned, “You are going to learn Spanish.”<sup>1</sup> The persecution was severe. Hundreds of pastors were deposed or fled, many living in forests. The loss of their clergy, many long established in their parishes, only exacerbated popular animosity toward the new measures.

Moritz of Saxony, recognizing the impossibility of implementing the *Augsburg Interim* in his new realm, charged his theologians, including Melancthon, with constructing a compromise formula. It primarily treated ceremonies, but also included ambiguous doctrinal statements, even on the chief doctrine of justification. The controversy that resulted showed the first fault lines along which Lutheranism would crack in the next few decades (Crypto-Calvinistic, Majoristic, Synergistic, etc.), differences of orientation and spirit that had likely long festered beneath the surface.<sup>2</sup> This evidenced a “coincidence of the content of the Wittenberg message with its method,” as Robert Kolb has aptly described it.<sup>3</sup> The Adiaphoristic party, and the later Philippist party in subsequent controversies, which consisted of many of the same players, were largely centered in Wittenberg and Leipzig. The Gnesio-Lutherans, on the other hand, established an early stronghold at Magdeburg and later in Jena, where John Frederick founded a new university,

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<sup>1</sup> Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002), 124.

<sup>2</sup> For more on Kaufmann's argument regarding the anachronism of speaking of Gnesio-Lutherans at this time, see Thomas Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 74. For a similar assessment of the implications of the Adiaphoristic Controversy, see Thomas Kaufmann, “Matthias Flacius Illyricus. Lutherischer Theologe und Magdeburger Publizist,” in *Mitteldeutsche Lebensbilder: Menschen im Zeitalter der Reformation*, ed. Werner Freitag (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 184.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2005), 5.

having lost the University of Wittenberg after his disastrous defeat at Mühlberg and ensuing captivity.<sup>4</sup>

Into the breach, in the midst of this identity, confessional, and political crisis, stepped a foreigner who likely never preached a sermon in German and admittedly lacked full proficiency in it. Matthias Flacius, denounced by his one-time friend and mentor, the usually moderate Philipp Melanchthon, as the “Illyrian viper” and “runaway slav”—a racial slur utilizing a clever play on words because Latin does not distinguish the word Slav from slave—would become perhaps the most divisive figure in German Lutheranism well beyond the time of the publication of the Formula of Concord.<sup>5</sup> Twenty-seven years of age, a gifted and promising Hebrew instructor at the University of Wittenberg, a student of Melanchthon and Luther, he became the most prolific author in Germany for the next five years. This Illyrian upstart framed the debate, delineated the boundaries of true Lutheranism, and led the resistance of the last hold-out of the Schmalkaldic League, the city of Magdeburg, popularly known during this period as “our Lord God’s chancery.”<sup>6</sup>

In this thesis, I will explain how this happened, outline the ways in which Matthias Flacius Illyricus defined Lutheranism, and examine where he drew confessional lines. In addition, I will explore the approaches he advocated during the Interim crisis, his methods of argumentation, and recurring themes, images, Bible passages, historical accounts, metaphors, and other literary devices in his works. Since most historians have focused principally upon

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<sup>4</sup> Theodore E. Schmauk and C. Theodore Benze, *The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005), 597. The work was originally published in 1911.

<sup>5</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther’s Reform*, 129.

<sup>6</sup> Nathan Rein’s recent monograph on Magdeburg propaganda in the Interim crisis takes its title from this popular moniker for the city. Nathan Rein, *The Chancery of God: Protestant Print, Polemic and Propaganda against the Empire, Magdeburg 1546-1551* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2008).

Flacius as a controversial theologian and polemicist, I will primarily investigate positive statements of his counsel and doctrine as opposed to writings geared directly against other theologians, theological orientations and positions—although all of his writings from this period contain oppositional aspects. I will do this in order to more fully demarcate, illuminate, explicate, and appreciate his worldview, confessional identity, doctrine, etc., not merely in contradistinction to his opponents', but in and of themselves. As part of this process, I will pay particular attention to Flacius' use of Luther's writings, especially those which touched upon the possibility of resistance, as well as his appeals to the reformer as a theological and prophetic authority in the Christian Church. I will also articulate his internalization of Luther's personal and public theological struggles and life events.

### I. Flacius' Propaganda War

During the Adiaphoristic Controversy Matthias Flacius Illyricus was responsible for at least 115 publications—his own writings, translations, and republications of Luther, other theologians, and church histories. A handful of these publications are German and Latin versions of the same work. The majority of them are polemical and controversial, whether directly or inferentially, for instance, in the case of historical accounts and republished writings of Luther. Even in such inferential cases, however, the reader need not work hard to draw the intended conclusions. Flacius usually included a preface or conclusion to help in that process. Although Flacius never felt competent in German, the majority of his publications during this period appeared in that language, reflecting the popular nature of his appeal. Additionally, he produced significantly more Latin works than his colleagues in Magdeburg. These Latin works were often responses to the Latin publications of others, of a more technical, academic nature, or intended for readership beyond the borders of Germany. The Latin texts are rather evenly distributed

throughout the period of the Adiaphoristic Controversy and constitute a little less than a third of his publications. Flacius' publications vary in length, but the majority are at least fifteen pages and a number extend beyond one hundred pages. This reinforces how remarkably productive Flacius was in the contentious years under consideration here.

## II. English Historiography

Although English language scholarship on the Adiaphoristic Controversy remains sadly insufficient, there are noteworthy scholarly contributions on the subject, a number of them recent. Among these publications the work of Oliver Olson stands out. Olson's 2002 *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* is the most thorough treatment of the life and labor of Flacius since Wilhelm Preger's two-volume *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*. While it pays specific attention to Flacius, it also offers elucidating commentary on the *Interim* controversy as a whole.<sup>7</sup> Olson's article, "Theology of Revolution: Magdeburg, 1550-1551," is a must-read for students of the siege of Magdeburg and its grounds for resistance.<sup>8</sup> In addition to Oliver Olson, David Whitford has surveyed the Adiaphoristic Controversy and the positions taken by the Magdeburg confessors in his succinct *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition*. Utilizing especially Luther's 1531 *Dr. Martin Luther's Warning to His Dear German People*, Whitford explores Luther's evolving stance on justified resistance, especially after the Torgau meeting of the Wittenberg theologians with their jurist

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<sup>7</sup> Oliver K. Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden, Germany: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> Oliver K. Olson, "Theology of Revolution: Magdeburg, 1550-1551," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 3, no. 1 (April 1972): 56-79.



counterparts.<sup>9</sup> In this respect, further incorporation of Luther's *Zirkulardisputation zu Matthäus* would have been beneficial, however. Whitford then traces the influence of Luther's *Warning* upon the arguments of the pastors of Magdeburg in the *Magdeburg Confession*. While Flacius does not receive as much treatment as he probably ought in the book, Whitford does provide the reader with much-needed context. It should be noted, though, that Whitford operates almost exclusively on the basis of the German text of the *Confession*.

Other scholarly works touch upon the focus of my research to a lesser extent, especially for background and comparative purposes. Cynthia Grant Schoenberger's article, "Luther and the Justifiability of Resistance to Legitimate Authority," tracks the development of Luther's thought on justified resistance, but sadly only extends through 1530 and, therefore, does not encompass the most crucial time in the development of his thinking.<sup>10</sup> Her conclusion, however, is significant, because she debunks the myth of a Lutheran heritage of utter submissiveness and demonstrates Luther's personal willingness to countenance resistance under certain conditions.<sup>11</sup> Nathan Baruch Rein's "Faith and Empire: Conflicting Visions of Religion in a Late Reformation Controversy—The *Augsburg Interim* and Its Opponents, 1548-1550" provides helpful context for the *Augsburg Interim* and properly points out the connection between religious and political unity that undergirded its composition.<sup>12</sup> His argument that its collapse foreshadowed the fall of the Holy Roman Empire merits further attention. Nevertheless, Rein perhaps undervalues the

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<sup>9</sup> David Mark Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance: The Magdeburg Confession and the Lutheran Tradition* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001).

<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Grant Schoenberger, "Luther and the Justifiability of Resistance to Legitimate Authority," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40, no. 1 (January-March, 1979): 3-20.

<sup>11</sup> Schoenberger, "Luther and the Justifiability of Resistance," 20.

<sup>12</sup> Nathan Baruch Rein, "Faith and Empire: Conflicting Visions of Religion in a Late Reformation Controversy—The *Augsburg Interim* and Its Opponents, 1548-1550," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 71, no. 1 (March 2003): 45-74.

*Interim*'s clear and unwavering intention to establish an imperial church that was not only catholic and priest-centered but specifically Roman Catholic.<sup>13</sup> The emperor's letter to his sister, quoted by Whitford, reveals that the emperor considered the war—and quite assuredly the maneuvering that followed it—a means toward a very certain end: the return of Protestant territories to the papal fold.<sup>14</sup> More importantly, Rein's 2008 monograph, *The Chancery of God: Protestant Print, Polemic and Propaganda against the Empire, Magdeburg 1546-1551*, is a significant contribution to the English historiography of Magdeburg's resistance to the *Interim* through print media.<sup>15</sup> Here again, though, a sustained discussion of Flacius and his works is absent, which is surprising since Flacius produced more than half of the propaganda issued by the two main publishers of the embattled city, Michael Lotter and Christian Rödinger.<sup>16</sup> Only five of his individual works appear in Rein's bibliography. Thomas Kaufmann has written in English about Magdeburg's fight against the *Interims* in his article, "'Our Lord God's Chancery' in Magdeburg and Its Fight against the Interim," especially regarding the propaganda campaign of the Gnesio-Lutherans, and he instructively describes the arduous and furious pace and productivity of the Magdeburgers' campaign.<sup>17</sup> The article is to some extent a restatement of a chapter from his magisterial work on the Adiaphoristic Controversy in German, *Das Ende der Reformation*, which will be discussed in the German historiography. David C. Steinmetz's

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<sup>13</sup> Rein, "Faith and Empire," 71.

<sup>14</sup> Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 62-63.

<sup>15</sup> Nathan Rein, *The Chancery of God: Protestant Print, Polemic and Propaganda against the Empire, Magdeburg 1546-1551* (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus. Lutherischer Theologe und Magdeburger Publizist," in *Mitteldeutsche Lebensbilder: Menschen im Zeitalter der Reformation*, ed. Werner Freitag (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 2004), 185.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, "'Our Lord God's Chancery' in Magdeburg and Its Fight against the Interim," *Church History* 73, no. 3 (September 2004): 566-582.

*Luther in Context* includes a pertinent chapter, but his treatment of the two kingdoms is too simplistic and he relies too heavily on secondary sources rather than on the products of Luther's own pen.<sup>18</sup> W.D.J. Cargill Thompson unfortunately also fails to appreciate the full breadth of Luther's teaching on resistance in *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, although he does concede that the later Luther had at least begun to accept the idea of resistance in some instances.<sup>19</sup> He attributes this, however, to Luther's adoption of others' thought, however, and not of a fuller development of principles already present in the reformer's thought (for instance, he describes Melanchthon as probably the "first to fall").<sup>20</sup> Contrary to Whitford, who considers it crucial to understanding Luther's thinking regarding justified resistance, Thompson downplays *Dr. Martin Luther's Warning to His Dear German People* (1531), arguing instead that other writings from the time argue for neutrality.<sup>21</sup> He fails to make a proper distinction, though, between the *Warning* and other writings that touch upon resistance. The *Warning* laid down general principles, while those other writings dealt with circumstances at the moment, which were unique, often quickly changing, and subject to varying influences. Sadly, Thompson's book also suffers from a complete lack of footnotes, because Thompson died before the book was finished. This makes it extremely difficult to ponder and weigh the merits of his argumentation more thoroughly. With respect to the *Magdeburg Confession's* legacy, Quentin Skinner rightly indicates its influence on Calvinist thought, significant because theories of justified resistance

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<sup>18</sup> David C. Steinmetz, *Luther in Context*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002).

<sup>19</sup> W.D.J. Cargill Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, ed. Philip Broadhead (Sussex: Harvester Press, 1984), 92.

<sup>20</sup> Thompson, *The Political Thought of Martin Luther*, 106.

<sup>21</sup> All citations from the works of Martin Luther, unless otherwise noted, are from *Luther's Works*. American Edition, 55 vols, eds. Jaroslav Pelikan and Helmut T. Lehman (Philadelphia: Fortress and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-86). Hereafter this edition will be designated as "LW." For Luther's *Warning*, see LW 47:6-55.

have often incorrectly been assumed to have originated within Calvinism in contradistinction to Lutheranism.<sup>22</sup> Robert von Friedeburg successfully drives home this point in his chapter in the German work, *Das Interim 1548/50*.<sup>23</sup> Skinner also rightly notes the shift in Luther's thinking on resistance, explaining, "In the early 1530s, when it seemed likely that the armed forces of the Empire might destroy the Lutheran Church, Luther suddenly and permanently changed his mind over this crucial issue."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, he provides important perspective when he notes, "The articulation of these principles involved no appeal to the scholastic concept of a universe ruled by law, and scarcely any appeal even to the concept of an intuited law of nature: Luther's final word is always based on the Word of God."<sup>25</sup> Finally, he outlines the influence that Luther's *Warning* had on the Magdeburgers and points out that it went through a number of editions during the Schmalkaldic War and Interim crisis.<sup>26</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch in his 2005 publication, *The Reformation: A History*, fails to give due attention to the Adiaphoristic Controversy but does provide a fine example of the shallow deliberation accorded Flacius' person and work in much of the English historiography to date, as Oliver Olson has lamented in his biography of Flacius mentioned earlier.<sup>27</sup> In passing, MacCulloch essentially dismisses Flacius as "chief among these

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<sup>22</sup> Quentin Skinner, *The Age of Reformation*, vol. 2 of *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 206-224.

<sup>23</sup> Robert von Friedeburg, "Magdeburger Argumentationen zum Recht auf Widerstand gegen die Durchsetzung des Interims (1550-1551) und ihre Stellung in der Geschichte des Widerstandsrechts im Reich, 1523-1626," in *Das Interim 1548/50*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte (Heidelberg: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 2005), 389-437.

<sup>24</sup> Skinner, *The Age of Reformation*, 17.

<sup>25</sup> Skinner, *The Age of Reformation*, 19.

<sup>26</sup> Skinner, *The Age of Reformation*, 217-218.

<sup>27</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation: A History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

watchful, angry souls” who opposed the Interims.”<sup>28</sup> Finally, Steven D. Paulson has provided a very readable and helpful summary of the theological issues involved in the controversy in his *Lutheran Theology*.<sup>29</sup>

### III. German Historiography

The German historiography of the Adiaphoristic Controversy is more substantial. Thomas Kaufmann’s *Das Ende der Reformation* deserves first mention.<sup>30</sup> This substantial and authoritative work is *the* book on the Adiaphoristic Controversy, providing more detail and including more source work than any other monograph available. Here Kaufmann sets forth the convincing argument that the *Magdeburg Confession* and the other publications of the Magdeburg theologians, in addition to their general understanding of history, must be understood in the light of their apocalypticism. The Adiaphoristic Controversy, he insists, was more than a conflict between church and state. For those resisting, it was the very end of Luther’s Reformation that was at stake. Here Flacius’ work receives more attention than anywhere else except for Olson’s *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther’s Reform*. While Kaufmann’s book is not a treatment of Flacius’ life and work, the Illyrian appears again and again because he played such a substantial role in the Magdeburgers’ resistance and literary production. The middle of the book surveys a variety of the literary forms employed by the Magdeburgers and roughly half of those Kaufmann uses for examples are writings, translations, or republications by Flacius. His subsequent book, *Konfession und Kultur*, builds upon *Das Ende der Reformation*

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<sup>28</sup> MacCulloch, *The Reformation*, 349.

<sup>29</sup> Steven D. Paulson, *Lutheran Theology* (New York: T&T Clark International, 2011).

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

and sketches the further development of confessionalization.<sup>31</sup> Kaufman's chapter in *Mitteldeutsche Lebensbilder: Menschen im Zeitalter der Reformation* supplies a brief overview of Flacius' life and work and neatly positions him within the religious and political context of his time.<sup>32</sup>

In *Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim*, a collection of texts from the Adiaphoristic Controversy, Irene Dingel provides the text of three important Flacius publications and her introduction to the work is very helpful.<sup>33</sup> Her "Flacius als Schüler Luthers und Melanchthons," a published essay, is very thought-provoking and sheds light on Flacius' sense of himself and Lutheranism, as well as his relationship with his former preceptor and "Praeceptor Germaniae," Philipp Melanchthon.<sup>34</sup> She notes the extent to which Flacius internalized and identified with Luther's own theological controversies and conflicts, especially the antinomian debate, which took place just before Flacius' arrival in Wittenberg. Anja Moritz' *Interim und Apokalypse* is a noteworthy treatment of the Adiaphoristic Controversy, but, as with other books mentioned, Flacius receives no extended coverage, although he and his labors make brief appearances throughout the work.<sup>35</sup> Referenced in the English historiography, Robert von Friedeburg's "Magdeburger Argumentationen zum Recht auf Widerstand gegen die Durchsetzung des Interims (1550-1551) und ihre Stellung in der Geschichte des Widerstandsrechts im Reich, 1523-

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<sup>31</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, *Konfession und Kultur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006).

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 177-200.

<sup>33</sup> Irene Dingel, ed., *Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim: Der Interimistische Streit (1548-1549)* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co., 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Irene Dingel, "Flacius als Schüler Luthers und Melanchthons," in *Vestigia Pietatis. Studien zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit in Thüringen und Sachsen*, ed. Gerhard Graf, Hans-Peter Hasse, and Ernst Koch (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 77-93.

<sup>35</sup> Anja Moritz, *Interim und Apokalypse* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009).

1626” successfully helps the reader locate the works of the Magdeburg pastors and theologians on resistance within the greater temporal framework of the sixteenth and earlier seventeenth centuries.<sup>36</sup> The book includes a number of other helpful essays as well.<sup>37</sup> Gabriele Haug-Moritz’ *Der Schmalkaldische Bund, 1530-1541/42* traces the development, not only of the Schmalkaldic League, but of Lutheran arguments for and against resistance to the emperor.<sup>38</sup> Horst Rabe details the inner workings of the Diet of Augsburg in 1547 and 1548 and places the *Augsburg Interim* within the larger context of the emperor’s ambitions at the height of his power in Germany, especially his desire for a *Reichsbund*, in *Reichsbund und Interim*.<sup>39</sup> Eike Wolgast has produced two helpful monographs for understanding the development of Luther’s theology of resistance and the approach adopted by the Schmalkaldic League.<sup>40</sup> In this connection, Armin Kohnle’s *Reichstag und Reformation* is useful.<sup>41</sup> Kohnle emphasizes the importance of the early imperial diets for the later conflicts and stances adopted by the various parties involved in the religious question in the empire. Finally, as previously noted, the most comprehensive biography of Flacius remains Wilhelm Preger’s *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Robert von Friedeburg, “Magdeburger Argumentationen zum Recht auf Widerstand gegen die Durchsetzung des Interims (1550-1551) und ihre Stellung in der Geschichte des Widerstandsrechts im Reich, 1523-1626,” in *Das Interim 1548/50*, ed. Luise Schorn-Schütte (Heidelberg: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 2005).

<sup>37</sup> Luise Schorn-Schütte, ed., *Das Interim 1548/50* (Heidelberg: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> Gabriele Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund, 1530-1541/42* (Leinfelden-Echterdingen: DRW-Verlag Weinbrenner GmbH & Co., 2002).

<sup>39</sup> Horst Rabe, *Reichsbund und Interim: Die Verfassungs- und Religionspolitik Karls V. und der Reichstag von Augsburg 1547/1548* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1971).

<sup>40</sup> Eike Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie und die Politik der evangelischen Stände* (Heidelberg: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 1977); Eike Wolgast, *Die Religionsfrage als Problem des Widerstandsrechts im 16. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätverlag, 1980).

<sup>41</sup> Armin Kohnle, *Reichstag und Reformation* (Heidelberg: Verein für Reformationsgeschichte, 2001).

<sup>42</sup> Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*. 2 vols. (Erlangen: T. Bläsing, 1859-1861).

#### IV. Lacunae and Methodology

Even with the fine scholarship summarized here, much of it produced in the last ten to fifteen years, there are still holes, particularly with respect to the individual theologians of Magdeburg. Outside of Oliver's Olson's biography, none of it has thoroughly engaged one specific author's writings and his peculiar context. The Nicholases—Gallus and Amsdorf—the likely authors of the *Magdeburg Confession*, certainly deserve such investigation. Perhaps no one, however, deserves attention more than Matthias Flacius. He is notable for the breadth and volume of his production, his role, though a foreigner, as a key shaper of German Lutheran identity and confessionalization, and his steadfast resistance to the *Augsburg Interim* and the subsequent compromise formula, which he dubbed the *Leipzig Interim* in a publicity coup. It is hard to imagine the preservation of confessional Lutheranism without him, and his mark is unmistakable upon the theological battles that emerged after the Adiaphoristic Controversy—their content, tone, and methodology—as well as Lutheran thought and argumentation in general (both in his vein and in reaction to him).

Flacius has rightly been considered a controversial theologian. That is how he most often appears in historical scholarship. Flacius' theological orientation, conviction, and experience did not develop only in contrasts, however. In the midst of reactions to what he considered unacceptable compromises or heterodox theology, he did offer positive statements of his beliefs and of what he held to be proper, consistent, orthodox Christian doctrine and practice. The writings listed in the bibliography for consideration in this thesis paper have been chosen because they contain positive statements of Flacius' belief and provide helpful insight into his worldview, conception of history, theological method, argumentation, systematization of



doctrine, and identification with Luther and the whole of the Lutheran Reformation, as well as descriptions and delineations of just what a Lutheran was and ought to be. The four publications from the bibliography which I will examine most closely are the following: 1. *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici zur gedult und glauben zu Gott, im Creutz dieser verfolgung Geschrieben an die Kirche Christi zu Magdeburg*; 2. *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit, in bekentnis der warheit, Creutz, und Gebett, in dieser betrübtten zeit sehr nützlich und tröstlich*; 3. *Eine Christliche vermanung zur bestendigkeit, inn der waren reinen Religion Jhesu Christi, unnd inn der Augsburgischen bekentnis. Geschrieben an die Meissnische Kirche, unnd andere, so das lauttere Evangelium Jhesu Christi erkant haben*; and 4. *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen, Darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erkleret wird, widder die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen. Item ein brieff des ehrwirdigen Herrn D. Joannis Epini superintendenten zu Hamburg, auch von diesem handel an Illyricum geschrieben.*<sup>43</sup> The Admonitions [*Vermanung*] make Flacius' case to those currently suffering the consequences of the city's resistance and those Flacius insists should join the cause. *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen* explains Flacius' doctrine of adiaphora, how the current compromises impacted the whole of Lutheran doctrine, and what proper Christian practice should be in this time of persecution but, in many cases, also in general, even when there is no threat or persecution. It is here that the Flacian principle *nihil est adiaphoron in casu confessionis et scandali*, that is, that "nothing is an adiaphoron in a case of confession or scandal," finds its clearest explication, although he repeats

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<sup>43</sup> Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici zur gedult und glauben zu Gott, im Creutz dieser verfolgung Geschrieben an die Kirche Christi zu Magdeburg* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1551); *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit, in bekentnis der warheit, Creutz, und Gebett, in dieser betrübtten zeit sehr nützlich und tröstlich* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1549); *Eine Christliche vermanung zur bestendigkeit, inn der waren reinen Religion Jhesu Christi, unnd inn der Augsburgischen bekentnis. Geschrieben an die Meissnische Kirche, unnd andere, so das lauttere Evangelium Jhesu Christi erkant haben* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550); *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen, Darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erkleret wird, widder die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen. Item ein brieff des ehrwirdigen Herrn D. Joannis Epini superintendenten zu Hamburg, auch von diesem handel an Illyricum geschrieben* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1550).

it elsewhere. This is important, because, while this principle has often been quoted by scholars dealing with the Adiaphoristic Controversy, the specific argumentation behind it has gone unexplored in any significant detail. As a glance at the bibliography will reveal, some of the writings listed also appear in Latin translation. I have consulted these to detect any substantive differences in content or tenor.

The four works listed above will be supplemented by the rest of the writings listed in the bibliography, but especially two of his early anonymous works, first, *Ein gemeine protestation und Klagschrifft aller frommen Christen wieder das Interim und grausame verfolgung der widersacher des Evangelij*, written under the pseudonym Johannes Waremundus, and second, *Ein kurtzer bericht vom Interim. Durch Theodorum. Henetum allen frommen Christen*, written as Theodor Henetus. These works are similar in content and argumentation to the three *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*] listed above. In them Flacius makes his case for resistance to the emperor and pope, who are seeking to undo Luther's Reformation in the guise of liturgical compromise. This, he warns, is only a step toward the total overthrow of Luther's teaching. Two of Flacius' Latin works will also receive consideration, the 1549 pamphlet *Qvod hoc tempore nulla penitus mutation in religion sit in gratiam impiorum facienda. Contra quoddam scriptum incerti autoris in quo suadetur mutation piarum caeremoniarum in Papisticas per Hemannum Primatem* and the 1550 publication *Breves Summae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi*.<sup>44</sup> The former, like the *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*], argues for resistance to the pope and emperor through a refusal to accept the interims and the changes contained in them. The latter, in the spirit of Lucas

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<sup>44</sup> Theodor Henetus, *Ein kurtzer bericht vom Interim. Durch Theodorum. Henetum allen frommen Christen* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1548); Johannes Waremundus, *Ein gemeine protestation und Klagschrifft aller frommen Christen wieder das Interim und grausame verfolgung der widersacher des Evangelij* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1548); Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Qvod hoc tempore nulla penitus mutation in religion sit in gratiam impiorum facienda. Contra quoddam scriptum incerti autoris in quo suadetur mutation piarum caeremoniarum in Papisticas per Hemannum Primatem*, (Magdeburg: Matthias Lotter, 1549). Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Breves Summae Religionis Iesu Christi, & Antichristi* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550).

Cranach's satirical woodcuts contrasting Jesus and the pope, Christ and Antichrist, presents Luther's true Christian teaching in the first half and papal error in the second half. Through examination all of these writings I will assess the general consistency of argumentation, themes, imagery, biblical and historical examples, tone, and methodology employed by Flacius.

### V. Organization

The arrangement of this thesis is both chronological and thematic. The first chapter will provide the reader with some helpful background and perspective regarding Luther's theology and then examine Luther's teaching specifically on resistance. Special attention will be given to Luther's *Warning to His Dear German People*. A thorough study of Luther's doctrine of resistance would surely entail a good number of his other writings as well, for instance, his 1539 *Zirkulardisputation zu Matthäus*, but here the *Warning* will receive predominant and particular attention because of its influence on Flacius and the Magdeburgers. The second chapter will trace the history of the Schmalkaldic League and explain the political and theological background of the Adiaphoristic Controversy. It will also sketch Flacius' life up to the time of the controversy. The third chapter will introduce the reader to the primary sources utilized for this study and outline Flacius' general argumentation in the pamphlets under consideration, as well as the key Scriptures he used to ground his arguments theologically. The fourth chapter will consider the noteworthy examples Flacius chose to use from Scripture, the Apocrypha, and ecclesiastical history in order to illustrate his points or motivate his readers. The next chapters will examine predominant or particularly interesting themes from his writings, which shed light upon Flacius' worldview and conception of the controversy at hand: first, his apocalypticism; second, his remnant theology; third, his emphasis on confession and martyrdom as historical

marks and identifiers of the faithful church militant; and finally his use of outsiders, like Spaniards and Turks, to reinforce his case. Finally, for comparative and contextual purposes, the last chapter will summarize the argumentation of the famous *Magdeburg Confession* as well as the final judgment of the *Formula of Concord* on the matter in its Article X.

## VI. Arguments

In this thesis I will argue that Flacius viewed and framed the controversies of his day through the lens of those of Luther's time and that he, like the later Luther, operated with a pronounced apocalyptic sense. Furthermore, I will contend that, while he established doctrines with the New Testament, he most often illustrated them with the Old Testament, and that, whenever possible, he appealed to Luther and the confessional statements of the Lutheran Reformation, as well as the earlier writings of Wittenberg theologians, especially Philipp Melancthon. I also will demonstrate that Flacius, with Luther, viewed doctrine as one single entity and not as a collection of doctrines, which is why he saw in the proposed compromises and changes of the *Leipzig Interim* a threat, not only to certain teachings of Luther and the Scriptures, but to the entirety of the teachings of Luther and the Scriptures, and especially to the chief article of justification. Finally, through his appeals to earlier periods of persecution, both biblical and subsequent, the reader will find in Flacius' thought an emphasis on the true church as a remnant faced with the necessity of confession and martyrdom. For Flacius this emphasis on a suffering and persecuted church militant, engaged in a quest for doctrinal and practical fidelity to the Word of God and Luther's teaching, formed an integral part of Lutheran identity. In each age the church would have its foes, its Christ and Belial, and the church militant would never be without struggle, even in times of temporal peace, or the "peace of the belly," as he was wont to call it.

## **Luther, the Two Kingdoms, and His Warning**

### I. Luther's Theology of Two Kingdoms

At the outset, it is important for the reader to understand an important distinction in Luther's and Lutheran theology, that is, the distinction between righteousness *coram mundo* and *coram Deo*, civic righteousness and the righteousness that avails before God. The *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, which the reformer considered a faithful explication of his teaching, is helpful for elucidating this distinction in Article XVIII, where it takes up the role and limitations of free will.<sup>45</sup> There the *Apology* concedes such a thing as civic righteousness, or righteousness *coram mundo*, in the sight of the world. It states that the human will can "to some extent produce civil righteousness or the righteousness of works." What does this include? "It can talk about God and offer God acts of worship with external works," for instance, and "it can obey rulers and parents." Indeed, "by choosing an external work it can keep back the hand from murder, adultery, and theft." This "Scripture calls this righteousness of the flesh, which carnal nature (that is, reason) produces by itself apart from the Holy Spirit."<sup>46</sup> Yet righteousness *coram mundo*, while possible, is often rare because of the fallen state of humanity, as "the power of concupiscence is such that people more often obey their evil impulses than sound judgment" and "we see that not even the philosophers, who seemed to have aspired after this righteousness, attained it."<sup>47</sup>

According to the *Apology*, civic righteousness, *coram mundo*, is a blessing for the stability and benefit of society, but as much as it is to be praised, it also must be distinguished

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<sup>45</sup> Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 233-235. Hereafter abbreviated "KW."

<sup>46</sup> KW, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* XVIII.7, 233-234.

<sup>47</sup> KW, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* XVIII.5-6, 234.

from—and never esteemed higher than—the righteousness that avails before God, *coram Deo*. Righteousness *coram mundo* can do nothing to undo the damage sin has done with its eternal consequences. And so the *Apology* insists, “Nevertheless we do not ascribe to free will those spiritual capacities, namely, true fear of God, true faith in God, the conviction and knowledge that God cares for us, hears us, and forgives us, etc. These are the real works of the first table, which the human heart cannot produce without the Holy Spirit, just as Paul says.”<sup>48</sup>

Comprehension of this difference between the two righteousnesses is crucial to an understanding of Luther’s writings concerning the temporal and spiritual realms. It is what drove him to include the famous *allein* in his translation of Romans 3:28: “*So halten wir nun dafür, daß der Mensch gerecht werde ohne des Gesetzes Werke, allein durch den Glauben.*” In Luther’s view, people are saved through faith alone or they are not saved at all. People are righteous in Christ and with his righteousness or people are not righteous at all in God’s sight, *coram Deo*, no matter how good a person or citizen they might be *coram mundo*. Yes, hell will be filled with such good people. As Article IV of the *Augsburg Confession* so succinctly makes clear, “human beings cannot be justified before God by their own powers, merits, or works.” Rather “they are justified as a gift on account of Christ through faith when they believe that they are received into grace and that their sins are forgiven on account of Christ, who by his death made satisfaction for our sins. God reckons this faith as righteousness.”<sup>49</sup> In short, as the *Apology* summarizes Luther’s teaching, “It is helpful to distinguish between civil righteousness, which is ascribed to the free will, and spiritual righteousness, which is ascribed to the operation of the Holy Spirit in the regenerate.” This is important because “in this way outward discipline is preserved, because

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<sup>48</sup> KW, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* XVIII.7, 234.

<sup>49</sup> KW, *Augsburg Confession* IV.1-3, 39-41.

all people alike ought to know that God requires civil righteousness and that to some extent we are able to achieve it.” The two, however, remain distinct, “philosophical teaching and the teaching of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>50</sup>

In *Temporal Authority: To What Extent Should It Be Obeyed*, Luther emphasizes the importance of Christ’s conversation with Pilate, during which Jesus stated, “My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.”<sup>51</sup> He also points out that St. John the Baptist said to those soldiers—servants of the sword, the state—who came to him with crises of conscience, “Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.”<sup>52</sup> Christ did not overthrow the two kingdoms but placed them within their proper Christian context. St. John the Baptist did not toss out the role of the sword, but affirmed it, even while he at the same time informed the conscience of those who wielded it.

This, however, was not the first place Luther wrote in such a way or made use of these scriptural passages. As Luther was holed up in the Wartburg after Worms, Philip Melancthon seems to have apparently wrestled with the role and place of the state for Christians, particularly because of the agitation of the Zwickau prophets. Luther would dismiss these men as *Schwärmern*, enthusiasts, who thought that they had swallowed the Holy Spirit “feathers and all,” but they caused Melancthon much consternation.<sup>53</sup> Among other things, the prophets urged the creation of a truly Christian society. In response, Luther wrote to his nervous friend and

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<sup>50</sup> KW, *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* XVIII.9-10, 234-235.

<sup>51</sup> John 18:36 ESV.

<sup>52</sup> Luke 3:14 ESV; LW 45:88, 98.

<sup>53</sup> LW 40:83.

gifted colleague and reassured him of the divine institution of and will for temporal authority (the sword). Christ had not set forth guidelines and regulations for the use of the sword in the Gospels, but that was because it can “easily be regulated by human beings,” and the accounts of the evangelists nevertheless make clear that Christ “commended it to us and affirmed it as instituted, or rather he clearly asserted that it is divinely ordained.”<sup>54</sup>

According to Luther, the Christian is at the same time both a complete citizen of his nation and of heaven. As Christ is God and man in one person, so the Christian is a full member of both kingdoms in one person, and the two are hard to separate. An improper distinction between the two will, in Luther’s mind, only serve to do harm to the Christian’s person as a whole and confuse his work in both kingdoms. The Christian must live with the tension and without neglecting either realm. Thus, while working in the kingdom of the left (the state) for the good of his neighbor, the Christian’s conscience will rightly be informed by the teachings of Scripture. This will be so even as he argues on the basis of natural reason, the rightful guide for the kingdom of the left. While Luther has famously described reason as the devil’s whore (that is, fallen reason and reason misapplied in theology), he also frequently insists that reason is God’s gift to be used wisely in the temporal realm. Paul Althaus sums up Luther’s notion of the dual citizenship of the Christian well: “[The Christian] has two lords: one in the earthly kingdom and one in the spiritual kingdom. He is obligated to the emperor and to Christ at the same time; to the emperor for his outward life, to Christ inwardly with his conscience and in faith.”<sup>55</sup>

For Luther, the world is fallen but not to be forsaken. Christians are not to scamper off to the wilderness to flee society. The world is full of sinners, but that is precisely why, in Luther’s

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<sup>54</sup> LW 48:260-261.

<sup>55</sup> Paul Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, trans. Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 61-62.



theology, it so desperately needs Christ's saints. God does not need the Christian's good works, but his or her neighbor does.<sup>56</sup> Luther proceeds in his thought from creation to redemption to vocation. God makes you, God saves you, God plops you where he wants you for you to walk in the works he has prepared in advance for you to walk in.<sup>57</sup> Luther writes in his *Exposition of Psalm 127, for the Christians at Riga in Livonia*, "Indeed, one could very well say that the course of the world, and especially the doing of his saints, are God's mask, under which he conceals himself and so marvelously exercises dominion and introduces disorder in the world."<sup>58</sup> He preaches in a festival sermon "the whole Gospel leads you to notice your neighbor and show mercy to him, to help him and advise him as God has helped you" and "concerning our works God tells us that they belong down here on earth for our neighbor, for the poor, miserable, desperate people whom we shall help, whom we shall comfort, teach and advise."<sup>59</sup> In his saints God works not only for the good of his kingdom, that is, the kingdom of the gospel, but also for the kingdom of the state, the left hand, both to keep good order, and when necessary, through persecution and martyrdom, for instance, to bring change. The Christian Church not only has a place in this world but, with its works and prayers, salt and light, plays an irreplaceable role in its survival and well-being.

Paul Althaus explains that Luther's ethics are inseparable from his teaching on the chief article, justification by faith, because "justification is both the presupposition and the source of

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<sup>56</sup> Gustaf Wingren, *Luther on Vocation* (Evansville, IN: Ballast Press, 1994), 10.

<sup>57</sup> Ephesians 2:8-10.

<sup>58</sup> LW 45:331.

<sup>59</sup> *Festival Sermons of Martin Luther: The Church Postils*, trans. Joel Baseley (Dearborn MI: Mark V Publications, 2005), 60-61.

the ethical life.”<sup>60</sup> In other words, the Christian is set free from sin and free to serve, not for salvation—that inestimable burden has been lifted, since it was a yoke only Christ could bear—but as one saved and supplied with the ability and impetus to serve. The Christian thus serves, not under compulsion, but in love. He serves with works that flow from faith, and that faith, through the same gracious love of a merciful God who adopted the Christian in baptism, finds great joy and satisfaction in such service, for how can the bride not delight to serve her doting Bridegroom? This service to God through earthly vocation, and even in governmental vocations, is fundamental to Flacius’ later arguments concerning the duty of citizens, laypeople, pastors, and princes in resisting the *Interim* and to the *Magdeburg Confession*’s insistence that the lesser magistrate not only can resist a superior authority in certain instances, but indeed must as part of his or her vocation.

When, then, if the secular authorities in existence are ordained by God, and if the Christian is called to serve them, might a Christian resist such authorities? Luther was forced to wrestle with this when an imperial invasion seemed imminent after the Diet of Augsburg of 1530. In addressing the question of when resistance is appropriate, this portion of the paper will examine Luther’s critical treatise of 1531, written in the heat of this tension, *Dr. Martin Luther’s Warning to His Dear German People*.

## II. Luther’s Warning

The prospect of imperial invasion seemed very real after the Diet of Augsburg of 1530, which failed to resolve the religious question. There the emperor had rejected the *Augsburg Confession* and accepted the *Confutation*. Moreover, in a rump session of the diet in November

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<sup>60</sup> Althaus, *The Ethics of Martin Luther*, 3.

the emperor had declared his intention to use force if the Lutherans did not comply with his mandates. This was the temporal context of Luther's *Dr. Martin Luther's Warning to His Dear German People*.<sup>61</sup> There has been debate about Luther's intentions in writing the *Warning*—whether he really meant to say anything new by it or not, and whether it was in fact the call for resistance under appropriate circumstances, which some later interpreted it to be—but here the later reception of the work by those who justified resistance to the emperor and his allies is most pertinent.<sup>62</sup> It is possible that their reception of the work was quite contrary to the general spirit Luther exhibited within it, although unlikely in my opinion. Worthy of note, though, is Robert von Friedeburg's reminder that Luther never endorsed any sort of natural law right of defense for individual citizens. Rather, throughout the *Warning* he restricted the right of defense to the princes, likely as a result of the constitutional and legal arguments of the jurists which provided lawful grounds for such resistance.<sup>63</sup> The Magdeburgers, not Luther, extended the right of defense and resistance beyond princely magistrates to a “wide range of inferior magistrates” in their *Magdeburg Confession*.<sup>64</sup> A summary of the arrangement and argument of the *Warning* follows in order to familiarize the reader with it and make comparisons to the later works of Matthias Flacius and the Magdeburgers, especially the *Magdeburg Confession*, because these later Lutherans placed great emphasis on the *Warning*, quoted it, and even crafted some of their publications in similar style and arrangement to it.

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<sup>61</sup> For Luther's *Warning*, see LW 47:6-55.

<sup>62</sup> For the chief points of contention see Robert von Friedeburg, “Confusion around the Magdeburg Confession and the Making of ‘Revolutionary Early Modern Resistance Theory,’” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 98 (2006): 307-318; David M. Whitford, “Rejoinder to Robert von Friedeburg,” *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 98 (2007): 301-303.

<sup>63</sup> Friedeburg, “Confusion around the Magdeburg Confession,” 312.

<sup>64</sup> Friedeburg, “Confusion around the Magdeburg Confession,” 318.

In the *Warning*, Luther's answer regarding when resistance is permissible is rather simple: when obedience to God demands it. He distinguishes self-defense and rebellion and makes clear that only the former is debatable for Christians. Luther blames the stubbornness of the papal parties for the failure to reach religious peace so far.<sup>65</sup> For that reason, Luther concludes that God will swallow up these enemies in their hardness of heart like Pharaoh in the Red Sea. Yes, "God sure loves this and takes delight in it," and "such defiance and contempt of his grace are most pleasing to him," teaching moments for the arrogant.<sup>66</sup> The possibility of violence, and even his own death, does not terrify Luther, for "whoever kills Doctor Luther in an uprising will not spare many of the priests either," so that "in the end we will undertake a little pilgrimage together—they, the papists, into the abyss of hell to their god of lies and murder, whom they served with lies and murder; I to my Lord Jesus Christ, whom I served in truth and peace."<sup>67</sup>

Luther would not countenance rebellion, though he held it understandable, given the great tyranny of pope and emperor. Rebellion was neither Scriptural nor Lutheran, but God would surely use it, should it arise, to humble his enemies, not as the "fruit of Lutheran teaching," but of the papists' desire for conflict.<sup>68</sup> Justified resistance in Luther's view is self-defense, although even in that instance he would not be the one to call for war, because "it is not fitting for me, a preacher, vested with the spiritual office, to wage war or to counsel war or incite it, but rather to dissuade from war and to direct to peace, as I have done until now with all diligence."<sup>69</sup> It was

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<sup>65</sup> LW 47:11.

<sup>66</sup> LW 47:13.

<sup>67</sup> LW 47:15.

<sup>68</sup> LW 47:14.

<sup>69</sup> LW 47:18.

likely, however, that the enemies of God who sought war would in good time meet their Maccabees, a theme later developed by Mathias Flacius Illyricus and the confessors of Magdeburg.<sup>70</sup> Thomas Kaufmann calls the Maccabees the first and most important image and model of Christian defiance in the face of religious oppression.<sup>71</sup>

The *Warning* therefore offers pastoral counsel to those who may be faced with warfare, especially leaders who may have to choose between obedience to God or man, persecution of Christian subjects in their territories or protection of them. Conscience, as later for Flacius and the Magdeburg confessors, is central. Luther writes, “I will not reprove those who defend themselves against the murderous and bloodthirsty papists, nor let anyone else rebuke them as being seditious, but I will direct them in this matter to the law and to the jurists.” Yes, “when the murderers and blood-hounds wish to wage war and to murder, it is in truth no insurrection to rise against them to defend oneself.”<sup>72</sup> Pastorally, he continues, “I do not want to leave the conscience of the people burdened by the concern and worry that their self-defense might be rebellious. For such a term would be too evil and too harsh in such a case. It should be given a different name, which I am sure the jurists can find for it.”<sup>73</sup> The Lutherans desire peace but are faced with enemies who have “no law, either divine or human, on their side,” and so they needed to be ready, no doubt militarily, but especially spiritually.<sup>74</sup> No Protestant should want war, but

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<sup>70</sup> LW 47:17.

<sup>71</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 195.

<sup>72</sup> LW 47:19.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> LW 47:20.

they must be spiritually prepared for the possibility, for their opponents' only recourse was to force, which, unlike God's Word, they did have on their side.<sup>75</sup> He explains:

But since I am the 'prophet of the Germans'—for this haughty title I will henceforth have to assign to myself, to please and oblige my papists and asses—it is fitting that I, as a faithful teacher, warn my dear Germans against the harm and danger threatening them and impart Christian instruction to them regarding their conduct in the event that the emperor, at the instigation of his devils, the papists, issues a call to arms against the princes and cities on our side.<sup>76</sup>

Luther provides three reasons why the princes could disobey the emperor should the Roman Catholic parties press for war. First, "you, as well as the emperor, vowed in baptism to preserve the gospel of Christ and not to persecute it or oppose it."<sup>77</sup> In words echoed later by the Magdeburgers, Luther insists that "he who fights and contends against the gospel necessarily fights simultaneously against God, against the precious blood of Christ, against the Holy Spirit."<sup>78</sup> Second, "even if our doctrine were false—although everyone knows it is not—you should still be deterred from fighting solely by the knowledge that by such fighting you are taking upon yourself a part of the guilt before God of all the abominations which have been committed and will be committed by the whole papacy."<sup>79</sup> Third and finally, "if you did otherwise you would not only burden yourself with all these abominations and help strengthen them, but you would also lend a hand in overthrowing and exterminating all the good which the dear gospel has again restored and established," which he then describes for them.<sup>80</sup> This is no

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<sup>75</sup> LW 47:25.

<sup>76</sup> LW 47:29.

<sup>77</sup> LW 47:35.

<sup>78</sup> LW 47:35.

<sup>79</sup> LW 47:36.

<sup>80</sup> LW 47:52.

trifling concern, for “if this doctrine vanishes, the church vanishes,” and even if all should try to undo it, “it must remain and the world must continue to perish on account of it.”<sup>81</sup> If the princes were to obey the emperor in this regard, they would “help to destroy Christ’s kingdom and rebuild the devil’s.”<sup>82</sup> In short, the Christian “must obey God rather than men,” as the *clausula Petri* of Acts 5:29 states.<sup>83</sup> He warns, “Christ will not be afraid of you and will also (God willing) stand his ground against you. But if he does, you will have quite a battle on your hands.”<sup>84</sup> One can understand why those words would have resonated with Flacius and the Magdeburgers and why they would have found in them a justification for their resistance as well as grounds to claim theological kinship with Luther in their course of action, even if, in the case of the pastors who ascribed to the *Magdeburg Confession*, their course included in the lesser magistrate argument an expansion of Luther’s parameters regarding who is entitled to resist a superior magistrate.

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<sup>81</sup> LW 47:54.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

## The Schmalkaldic League, the Outbreak of the Controversy, and Flacius' Life until Then

### I. Luther and the Jurists

To understand the development of the Schmalkaldic League, it is beneficial to consider how Luther saw himself vis-à-vis politicians and politics. He no doubt recognized that his theological stances had set a Reformation under way which included clear political aspects and dynamics. He also certainly realized that his continued personal survival, and not only that of his theological reform, depended upon the princely protection, no matter how piously, and certainly sincerely, he commended himself to God's hands alone. Luther's God used means, both to bring forgiveness through Word and sacrament and to bring protection and foster public welfare in the temporal realm. His explanation of the Fourth Commandment in the Large Catechism evidences that. With the death of Frederick the Wise, who did not desire direct consultation with Luther and navigated his political course largely without solicited advice from the theologians in Wittenberg, John of Saxony, a committed Lutheran, came to power.<sup>85</sup> Luther was now regularly consulted, and his opinions carried noteworthy weight at the court. And yet, for all of this, unlike Zwingli, Bucer, or Calvin, Luther was never in the middle of civic dealings and lacked any comprehensive feel for the basic mechanics of the civil realm.<sup>86</sup> He operated with a clear political naiveté and without the cultivated savvy of the urban reformers. Luther was a university professor and a preacher to the comparatively unrefined citizens of Wittenberg. He did not regularly interact with a powerful city council. He did not daily grapple with the broader imperial politics that could swiftly and significantly impact the security and welfare of an imperial city as some other reformers would have. Throughout his life and in every crisis Luther continued to see

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<sup>85</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 278, 291.

<sup>86</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 289.



himself tasked with the pastoral care of souls and consciences. Eike Wolgast rightly explains, “Luther never saw himself as a politician, but always and in every situation as a theologian and as one charged with the cure of souls [*Seelsorger*],” so that that his politics were a derivative of his theology, the testing of theological principles in political practice.<sup>87</sup>

## II. The Diet of Speyer

The 1529 Diet of Speyer, not attended by Charles V, but overseen by Ferdinand in his stead, marked an important shift in the course of the Reformation in Germany. While the diet in the same city in 1526 had suspended execution of the Edict of Worms, the 1529 diet lifted that suspension. This only fueled the suspicions of the Protestant parties that conflict was inevitable. This was especially true of Landgrave Philip of Hesse, who had already been pushing for an alliance of Protestant forces, particularly after getting his hands on a forged document detailing a Roman Catholic alliance supposedly formed after the earlier Diet of Speyer. Charles V had actually sent instructions for Ferdinand to act in a diplomatic and mollifying fashion with the Protestant parties, since he needed their assistance against the surging Turkish armies approaching Vienna. Nevertheless, Ferdinand brought the diet to a speedy conclusion before the emperor’s counsel could be heeded, or perhaps he never had any intention of heeding it. Unlike at the earlier diet in Speyer, the Protestants were now in the clear minority, and there was little they could do to stop the new measures. Thus, the diet in the end forbade new reform measures and the Edict of Worms was to be enforced in the territories of the empire. Effectively Roman Catholicism was to be the faith of the empire, regardless of the confessional convictions of its ruler. This was of course unacceptable to the Protestant princes and imperial cities, and so the

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<sup>87</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 13.

road was paved to a defensive alliance like the Schmalkaldic League. In the end, unable to change or substantially influence the decisions of the committee of the diet—Landgrave Philip was not even consulted—all that was possible for the evangelicals was protest, the famous Protestation of Speyer of 25 April 1529, from which Protestants take their name.<sup>88</sup>

### III. Augsburg, Torgau, and the Open Door

As the Turkish threat continued to materialize and grow, a solution to the German religious question became increasingly important for Charles V, and so, while the Diet of Augsburg of 1530 dealt with a variety of issues, religion dominated. The evangelicals presented a summary of their faith, the *Augsburg Confession*, written by Philipp Melanchthon and based upon a number of previous theological articles, which has since served as a shibboleth for Protestants, especially on the European continent. The Catholic theologians in turn presented their *Confutation*, with which Charles V was not impressed. In the end, however, the emperor rejected the *Augsburg Confession* and accepted the *Confutation*. The subsequent Protestant *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* had little bearing imperially, although it was widely disseminated in Germany, and the emperor's refusal to consider it bolstered the Protestant narrative that pope and emperor together were hardening themselves, or had hardened themselves, against the truth. It also became part of the 1580 *Book of Concord*, a collection of the confessional statements of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Together with the lifting of the religious compromise of the 1526 Diet of Speyer at the 1529 Diet of Speyer, Charles V's actions

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<sup>88</sup> Kohnle, *Reichstag und Reformation*, 368.

at Augsburg served as the chief catalyst for the founding of the Schmalkaldic League, bringing, as Gabriele Haug-Moritz has noted, conflicts that had festered for a decade into open dissent.<sup>89</sup>

In addition to the actions of Ferdinand and Charles V, however, there were also important theological developments that cleared the way for a defensive alliance. The disputation of Saxon jurists and theologians at Torgau was foundational both for the subsequent evolution of the Schmalkaldic League and the theories of resistance propagated by the city of Magdeburg during the Interim crises. Torgau was a watershed moment for the possibility and permissibility of Lutheran resistance in the first half of the sixteenth century. And it was so, not because Luther offered any ringing endorsement of such a path, but because he in essence, intentionally or unintentionally, removed himself and the rest of the Wittenberg faculty from ongoing and meaningful debate of the issue with the court. The jurists were thus set free to formulate arguments and theories without the hindrance of the traditionally conservative and recalcitrant opinions of the faculty which had so frustrated them up until this point, Bugenhagen being the exception, because he had expressed an argument for resistance unpopular with the rest of the faculty but appreciated by the jurists.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, the jurists later used Luther's *Gutachten* to repel religiously motivated objections to resistance on a number of occasions.<sup>91</sup> Luther himself provided no clearly defined advocacy, absolution, or framework for resistance; in fact, it remained possible only by the jurists' definitions based upon natural and imperial law.<sup>92</sup> As one historian notes, "When the elector summoned both his lawyers and parson/professors to dispute the justifiability of resistance in the darkening political atmosphere after the failure of the diet at

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<sup>89</sup> Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 45.

<sup>90</sup> For more on Bugenhagen, see Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 136ff.

<sup>91</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 191.

<sup>92</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 178, 182

Augsburg to resolve the religious ‘question,’ it was the jurists who did elaborate the constitutional and legal arguments in favor of Saxon membership in the proposed league.” The jurists argued that “the emperor had been elected upon specific conditions, they insisted, and thus had an obligation to rule in conjunction with the estates. If he violated the laws of the empire, as he had done by proceeding against the Protestants when their appeal to a council was still pending, all their obligations to him were erased.”<sup>93</sup>

Luther did not necessarily change his position at Torgau. Rather, he stepped back from the debate. He claimed incompetence in questions of imperial law. He declared himself unqualified to offer political counsel on such matters, so that the jurists, now unencumbered, could proceed with their argumentation from imperial law.<sup>94</sup> When this was coupled with the death of John of Saxony, who regularly sought Luther’s counsel and, much to Landgrave Philip of Hesse’s consternation, adopted a more patient and moderate tone and approach because of it, a recipe for a precipitous turn emerged. Luther had long harbored suspicions regarding Philip of Hesse’s ambitions, and these suspicions would only grow with time. Luther feared the consequences of the youthful chest puffing and *Krieglust* of the young princes, especially the Landgrave, who were now at the head of the two most influential Protestant lands in Germany.<sup>95</sup> They lacked the wisdom of Frederick the Wise and scruples of John of Saxony, with whose death Luther’s influence with the Saxon court clearly waned.<sup>96</sup> John Frederick, young, ambitious, and much more amenable to Philip of Hesse’s arguments and strategies, was much less interested

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<sup>93</sup> Cynthia Grant Shoenberger, “The Development of the Lutheran Theory of Resistance: 1523-1530,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 8, no. 1 (April 1977): 71.

<sup>94</sup> Wolgast, *Die Religionsfrage als Problem*, 20.

<sup>95</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 124-125.

<sup>96</sup> Wolgast, *Die Wittenberg Theologie*, 296.

in the faculty's opinions and was determined to act, even in theological matters, as he saw fit. This marked a crucial shift from Frederick the Wise's hands-off passivity and John of Saxony's devout desire to consult the theologians.

The Schmalkaldic League eventually would have a battle on its hands—one that it lost humiliatingly and disastrously to imperial forces. That does not mean, however, that it would not be quite a force for a number of years leading up to its demise. In fact, a good argument could be made that had it not been for its growing potency and, hence, its increasing ambitions, it might not have been undone. That is a thesis for another paper, however. Here it is enough to briefly sketch the founding of the League, which took place in 1531 and included Landgrave Philip of Hesse and John of Saxony. A defensive alliance—although Luther had his doubts about the sincerity of the stated nature of the League, at least in so far as Philip of Hesse's ambitions were concerned—the formation of a league was hardly innovative or shocking. Leagues had a long history in imperial politics, and the emperor had depended upon them in numerous instances in the past. The Swabian League, for example, had long been a powerful player in German political history. The novelty of the Schmalkaldic League rested in the fact that it was a defensive alliance formed for fear of attack by the emperor. Thus, it was an alliance *against* the emperor's feared invasion. The exclusion of the emperor was momentous, therefore. It raised important constitutional issues and challenged the basic nature of the Holy Roman Empire and the relationships of the rulers of its various territories and cities.

In 1535 membership in the Schmalkaldic League was opened to all who accepted the *Augsburg Confession*. This led to the entry of a number of important Protestant cities. Larger membership also increased the possibility of conflicts, however, as each member pledged defensive aid to any other that was attacked for the sake of its religion. More significantly,

Francis I, King of France, also joined the League. Thus, the League lost any claim to a purely religious nature, as Francis and his realm did not accept the *Augsburg Confession*. By 1539, Denmark had been added to the alliance, making it a veritable force with which to be reckoned. This increased vitality and might emboldened the leading rulers of the League, the young princes Philip of Hesse and John Frederick. Confident, they would increasingly flex their muscle in the years to come, further cultivating skepticism about the genuine nature of their alliance, which may indeed have undermined the allegiance or sympathies of some princes and rulers who shared theological convictions but feared disturbances to the balance of power. Such noteworthy and controversial undertakings include the reinstatement of Ulrich in Württemberg, after which Lutheran reforms were introduced there, and the occupation of Henry V's territory in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel after the League had come to the aid of Goslar, which Henry V had occupied under his own religious pretexts. In retrospect, while the Schmalkaldic League was founded upon a religious premise and as a defensive alliance for confessors of the Augsburg Confession, it is improper to conclude that there were not significant, and even overriding, political dimensions. Haug-Moritz explains in her massive work on the League, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund, 1530-1541/1542*, which unfortunately only covers up to the year 1542, the pinnacle of the League's power in her view, that it is simply untenable, in the light of further research, to operate under the popular assumptions of the past which would consider the League only under the central concept of religion and defense, for the Schmalkaldic League was neither limited to religion nor aimed solely at defense.<sup>97</sup> Throughout ran clear political concerns and consequences, for instance, property questions and other motivations of self-interest.<sup>98</sup> The

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<sup>97</sup> Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 91.

<sup>98</sup> Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 506-510.

League's impact, therefore, extends beyond the scope of confessionalization and well into the realm of territorialization.<sup>99</sup>

It is important to note again the significant turn that occurred with the ascendancy to the throne of John Frederick, who was much less reliant upon the counsel of Luther and the Wittenberg faculty and much more ambitious than his predecessor, John of Saxony. With John's death, the League now found itself with rulers several decades Luther's junior, largely untested, and full of vigor and aspiration. Gone was the cautiousness previously employed by the Saxon electors, and Philip, whose aggressiveness had been tempered so far only by the opinions of Luther and Melancthon, received a much more receptive hearing at the Saxon court for his arguments and strategies. In the end, perhaps as a direct consequence, the young prince, John Frederick, would find himself captive, having lost his gamble, fallen from the apex of his power to loss of his electoral title, his lands, and the university in Wittenberg. For all that sorrow, however, he would become a hero for the Magdeburgers, second only to Luther in their hagiography, portrayed as a victim of the union of impious papistic and imperial forces, a figure around which to rally.

#### IV. The Defeat of the Schmalkaldic League and the Adiaphoristic Controversy

1546 and 1547 were cataclysmic years for German Protestants, each tinged with painful loss. Luther died in 1546 and Philipp Melancthon, the reluctant heir-apparent, became the purported theological head of the Lutheran Reformation. He lacked Luther's charisma and prophetic voice, however, and theologians and historians ever since have debated whether he acted as he did in the years immediately following the reformer's death because he was a

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<sup>99</sup> Haug-Moritz, *Der Schmalkaldische Bund*, 518.

frightened academic or because he had long harbored latent differences in theological orientation with Luther. While the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, was unable to wage war against the Lutheran princes of the Schmalkaldic League during Luther's lifetime, there was now a lull in tensions with other European powers and the threat of the Turks, for which he was reliant upon the Lutherans for aid. The opportunity for decisive action arrived when the forces of several Lutheran imperial cities occupied Füssen. Thus the Schmalkaldic War began in 1546 and ended quickly thereafter with a decisive imperial victory at the Battle of Mühlberg 24 April 1547, largely made possible by the treachery of Moritz of Saxony, who was called by some the "Judas of Meissen" for having gone over to the emperor's side. The significance of this factor deserves attention. A Lutheran prince's political and territorial ambitions, coupled with personal animosity toward his cousin, led him to act against the Protestant Schmalkaldic League in cooperation with the Roman Catholic emperor and parties, not with any expressed intention to renounce the Reformation (indeed, an argument could be made that in the end his actions went a long way toward preserving the Reformation), but to enhance his status and increase his realm.

Buoyed by his victory, the emperor now tried to foist the *Augsburg Interim* upon the Lutheran churches of Germany. The *Augsburg Interim* sought to reintroduce a wide breadth of Roman Catholic ceremonies and doctrine. It restored the seven sacraments of Roman Catholicism, taught transubstantiation, reinforced the ecclesiastical authority and rule of bishops and the Roman pontiff, omitted *sola fide* from the formula of justification, and mandated a spate of long-abolished customs like fasts and festivals in evangelical territories. The evangelical churches in Germany protested and resisted steadfastly. Moritz of Saxony realized the impossibility of implementing it. He therefore commissioned his newly acquired Wittenberg theologians with the production of a mediating formula for Saxony. They primarily addressed



ceremonies in the subsequent document, but also included some ambiguous doctrinal statements, even on the chief doctrine of justification. The chief article thus still remained weak and unclear. The Wittenbergers tried to moderate and avoid some of the more troublesome measures of the *Augsburg Interim* like the eucharistic prayer, the formula for extreme unction, and the use of chrism in baptism, yet substantial sticking-points remained for many Lutheran pastors and theologians. Vestments like the surplice and festivals like Corpus Christi became symbolic of the controversial measures that remained in force in Moritz' compromise. The Gnesio-Lutherans, as they later became known, opposed the adoption of this formula, which Flacius successfully made popularly known as the *Leipzig Interim*. The controversy that resulted, which shook German Protestantism to its core, generated or revealed a number of the fault lines along which Lutheranism would crack in the decades to come (e.g. Crypto-Calvinistic, Majoristic, Synergistic, etc.).<sup>100</sup> Gnesio-Lutherans and Philippists, as Melanchthon's supporters, many of them former students, were eventually termed, would subsequently battle over teachings on original sin, free will, good works, and a number of other matters—their disputes both academic and personal, theological and political. The *Formula of Concord* of 1577 several decades later endeavored to resolve the bitter disputes that broke out over such teachings, often settling on a middle ground between the positions and emphases of the two groups. Several Gnesio-Lutherans, including Flacius, would have their positions explicitly disavowed by the *Formula*—in Flacius' case, his position on original sin. All of these positions, however, were stances taken after the conclusion of the Adiaphoristic Controversy in response to provocative theological statements made by opponents.

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<sup>100</sup> For more on Kaufmann's argument regarding the anachronism of speaking of Gnesio-Lutherans at this time, see *Das Ende der Reformation*, 74.

### V. Adiaphora Defined

A brief explanation of the theological term adiaphora is necessary at this point, because it was a term central to the controversy that erupted. Some information on the background and content of the Interims will also be helpful. Adiaphora is a term borrowed from the Greeks, and especially the Stoics. Bente defines them as follows: “ceremonies which God has neither commanded nor prohibited are adiaphora (*res mediae, Mitteldinge*) and *ceteris paribus* (other things being equal), may be observed or omitted, adopted or rejected.”<sup>101</sup> Earlier Christian theologians, Thomas Aquinas, for instance, had addressed indifferent matters in their theological works, and the concept itself, though not the term, harkens back to the Pauline epistles and Paul’s emphasis on Christian freedom exercised in Christian love, for example, in Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 10. Luther uses the term “adiaphora” in his lectures on Galatians. There he explains, “For to those who believe in Christ whatever things are either enjoined or forbidden in the way of external ceremonies and bodily righteousnesses are all pure, adiaphora, and are permissible, except insofar as the believers are willing to subject themselves to these things of their own accord or for the sake of love.”<sup>102</sup> The *Formula of Concord* describes adiaphora as “ceremonies or ecclesiastical practices that are neither commanded nor forbidden in God’s Word but that were introduced in the churches for the sake of good order and decorum,” which is a useful definition for the purposes of this paper.<sup>103</sup>

It is important to understand what added extra sting to the *Leipzig Interim* for those Lutherans who opposed it. Indeed, while the *Augsburg Interim* united Lutherans in their

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<sup>101</sup> F. Bente, “Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church” in *Concordia Triglotta: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921): 109. This appears in Bente’s description of the anti-Adiaphorists’ position.

<sup>102</sup> LW 27:161.

<sup>103</sup> KW, *Epitome* X.1, 515.

opposition, the *Leipzig Interim*, so named in a publicity triumph by Matthias Flacius, fractured them irreconcilably in certain instances. Not only had Flacius' former Wittenberg colleagues betrayed Luther, but Flacius and the other anti-Adiaphorists insisted that they had also betrayed and forsaken their rightful temporal lord, the former elector, the captured John Frederick, when they decided to serve at the whim of the traitorous Moritz instead. This was theological and political infidelity, therefore. Interestingly, even John Calvin chastised Melancthon, albeit diplomatically, for his complicity, or at least his failure to act as a more vocal opponent of the adiaphora.<sup>104</sup> In the minds of the Gnesio-Lutherans, the very Lutheran theologians and leaders who should have led the resistance had forsaken Luther's Reformation, their secular ruler, and the Word of God by their actions. This was betrayal from within instead of assault from without. Their opponents argued there was simply no reason for the Wittenberg theologians and their associates to have acted as they had, other than to appease the emperor and the Antichrist through liturgical concessions (the surplice, or chorrock, became a symbol of these concessions) and a compromise formula even of the doctrine of justification, the chief article. These were compromises, they insisted, made and tolerated only for fear of persecution and temporal peace. Certainly the conciliatory and deferential tone of the *Leipzig Interim*, so offensive to its vocal opponents, is apparent from its very beginning:

Our concern is based upon our desire to be obedient to the Roman Imperial Majesty and to conduct ourselves in such a way that his Majesty realize that our interest revolves only around *tranquility, peace and unity*. This is our counsel, made in good faith; it is what we ourselves want to serve and promote wherever possible. For in contrast to what some say and write about us—without any basis—our concern and our intention are always directed not toward causing schism and complications, but rather toward *peace and unity*. We testify to that in

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<sup>104</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation*, 115.

the very presence of God, to whom all human hearts are known. Our actions will demonstrate that.<sup>105</sup>

#### VI. A Brief Biography of Matthias Flacius Illyricus to the time of the Adiaphoristic Controversy

Matija Vlačić Ilirik, Matthias Flacius Illyricus, was born into a relatively well-to-do family 3 March 1520, in Labin, Istria, which was then part of the Venetian Republic. His great-uncle was Baldo Lupetino, who was condemned to death 27 October 1547 for his “Lutheran” faith after five years of imprisonment. It must be remembered, however, that victims of the Inquisition in general and in Venice were not infrequently labeled Lutherans as a sort of general designation of heresy. That being said, Lupetino was heavily influenced by the writings of Luther and shared them with Flacius. Indeed, the princes of the Schmalkaldic League had even requested his release—Flacius himself bore a letter to Venice in 1542 signed by John Frederick, an impressive accomplishment, since he had only been in Wittenberg about a year at that point—but to no avail. Flacius’ firsthand experience with the Inquisition left a lifelong impression. Lupetino’s encouragement to him during his imprisonment certainly struck home during later persecution: “non ricantare, anzi cantare,” that is, “Do not recant, but sing.”<sup>106</sup> Flacius no doubt internalized the fact that his dear great-uncle died for being a “Lutheran.” Confession and martyrdom were part of his family history.

When he was sixteen years old, after the early death of his father, Flacius moved to Venice to pursue his education. He almost joined a Franciscan monastery at seventeen, but his great-uncle introduced him to the Reformation. In 1539, at the age of nineteen, a copy of Dante’s

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<sup>105</sup> Robert Kolb and James A. Nestingen, eds., *Sources and Contexts of the Book of Concord* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 184. The italics are added.

<sup>106</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther’s Reform*, 51.

*Divine Comedy* tucked in his bag, and with the encouragement of Lupetino, Flacius ventured north to study theology under the shining lights of the Lutheran Reformation in Germany.<sup>107</sup> He studied Hebrew at Basel before moving on to Tübingen and finally Wittenberg. At this point of his life, much of his theological knowledge was self-taught. At Wittenberg, he studied under both Philipp Melanchthon and Martin Luther, who was now in the last phase of his life and ministry. Even later in the scalding heat of the Adiaphoristic Controversy, Flacius openly admitted his indebtedness to Philipp, with whom he worked much more closely than Luther, as well as his other former Wittenberg instructors with whom he later engaged in polemics.<sup>108</sup> While studying at Wittenberg, Flacius also went through a bout of depression and spiritual angst, for which he sought Luther's pastoral counsel. Luther's spiritual insight and advice helped him find peace, and this relationship with the reformer became a defining feature of his life and later work, evident in his concern for the conscience of believers.

Flacius received his master's degree, Master of Philosophy, 24 February 1546, six days after Luther's funeral. His thesis, *That Holy Scripture was Written Completely from the Beginning Not Only with Consonants, but Also With Vowel-Points*, addressed the debate whether the Masoretic pointing of the Hebrew Old Testament was part of the original text. Flacius contended that it was, which scholars now know is untrue.<sup>109</sup> This was an important argument for debate with Roman Catholicism, however, because the papal parties argued that later Masoretic pointing lent support to the history and necessity of a magisterium within the church to authoritatively define and interpret Holy Scripture. Now married to a Lutheran pastor's daughter,

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<sup>107</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 35.

<sup>108</sup> Matthias Flacius Illyricus, *Entschuldigung Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, geschrieben an die Universitet zu Wittemberg der Mittelding halben. Item sein brief an Philip. Melanthonem sampt etlichen andern schriften dieselbige sach belangend. Verdeuscht* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1549), Aiii r.

<sup>109</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 53.

and having taught Hebrew in Wittenberg since 1544, hired although he was acknowledged to be “as good as nameless,” Flacius appeared to be settling down to a comfortable life in Wittenberg.<sup>110</sup> In but a few years, however, everything changed. The defeat of the Schmalkaldic League, the captivity of the former Elector of Saxony, John Frederick of Saxony, and the introduction of the *Augsburg Interim* seriously threatened the future of Luther’s Reformation.

Throughout the Interim crisis, Melanchthon and his colleagues in Wittenberg argued that their compromises involved only adiaphora and preserved the heart and core of the Lutheran faith, particularly the doctrine of justification, upon which Luther maintained the church stands or falls. Melanchthon and the so-called Adiaphorists, as Flacius called them, thus argued that Flacius and those of his party were introducing divisions into Lutheranism over indifferent practices lacking any meaningful doctrinal implications or detriment to Luther’s foundational teachings. Flacius would concede that such things normally could perhaps be adiaphora, but because the current compromises and ceremonies were drafted and initiated under compulsion, by the state and not the church, and in order to placate the enemies of the church, he refused to consider them adiaphora. In fact, he would later argue that in such a controversy nothing at all was an adiaphoron. He took this stand, not as someone unfamiliar with Wittenberg affairs, but as someone very much in the loop. Until Flacius’ departure from the city, Melanchthon often discussed the various conferences he attended and the proposals under consideration with him. Philipp had even instructed Flacius to make a copy of the compromise formula on justification drafted at Pegau, at which time Flacius complained, “What treacle!”<sup>111</sup> Melanchthon confided his

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<sup>110</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther’s Reform*, 52.

<sup>111</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther’s Reform*, 99.

fears regarding the *Augsburg Interim* to the young Hebrew professor.<sup>112</sup> So highly had Melancthon thought of him, in fact, that when he went to Braunschweig while the University of Wittenberg was closed because of the advance of Moritz' troops, Philipp recommended him to the schoolmaster there with a comparison to the fourth-century Bishop of Salamis in Cyprus, writing that Matthias "excels that pentaglot, the Salaminian, Epiphanius, not only in knowledge of languages, but in knowledge of affairs."<sup>113</sup> It was as a colleague who knew his opponents well, therefore, and still admired much about them and their accomplishments, that Flacius dismissed the Wittenbergers' claims that they dealt only with adiaphora and insisted that in their compromises crouched the real and present danger of "yawning atheism."<sup>114</sup> Crushed by his dear preceptor's timidity, he wrote that "Philomela had put the pipe in the sack and was afraid of the hawk."<sup>115</sup>

After writing a few pamphlets against the *Interim* under pseudonyms, Flacius decided to depart Wittenberg in 1549, initially leaving his "very pregnant wife" behind.<sup>116</sup> His first stop was Magdeburg, where Nicholas Amsdorf, Erasmus Alberus, and the city's other prominent theologians urged him to stay and help struggle against the *Interim*. He rejected their offer at first, though, because he feared that his health would not endure the siege he already foresaw on the horizon, since he "would have to eat smoked bacon and meat, and also salted and dried fish."<sup>117</sup> After further travels, however, he decided to accept the Magdeburgers' hospitality.

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<sup>112</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 121.

<sup>113</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 121, 68.

<sup>114</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 124.

<sup>115</sup> Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 118.

<sup>116</sup> Kaufmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 183.

<sup>117</sup> Kaufmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 183.

Nowhere was the opposition to the *Leipzig Interim* fiercer than in Magdeburg, a haven for theologians who, like Flacius, had fled other territories for reasons of conscience or to better oppose the new measures. Under the leadership of Nicholas Amsdorf, the longtime friend of Luther and head of the Reformation in Magdeburg, these theologians worked tirelessly, passionately, and uncompromisingly against all who had cooperated with the imperially mandated changes and thus, in their mind, against Luther's theological testament and legacy. In this fight, Flacius outstripped the rest in the vigor and magnitude of his efforts. As Kaufmann observes, "no other figure in the sixteenth century, not even Martin Luther, wrote and published so many pages in so short a time as did Flacius."<sup>118</sup>

### VII. Flacius' Luther-an Identity

It is important to remember straightaway that before the Adiaphoristic Controversy ever began, Flacius had personal experience with theologies in conflict and persecution. As mentioned in the sketch of his life, his uncle, Baldo Lupetino, who had exerted a good deal of influence on him and his education and formation as a young man, was a victim of the Inquisition in Venice. He was imprisoned and sentenced to death, not merely for heresy, but for being a *Lutheran*. It is hard to imagine that this did not make a lasting impression on Flacius. He was a second generation confessor, so to speak, and he was carrying on the legacy of his uncle and all those who had risked worldly goods and fame for the sake of Christ and the truth of God's Word.

After Lupetino, no one had influenced Flacius' faith and Christian formation more than Martin Luther. Irene Dingel's article, "Flacius als Schüler Luthers und Melanchthons," sheds

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<sup>118</sup> Kaufmann, "Our Lord God's Chancery," 576.



particular light on the relationship between Flacius and his teachers, Luther and Melanchthon, as well as Flacius' self-identification with Luther and his struggles.<sup>119</sup> Crucial is the fact that it was Luther who had brought the young Illyrian out of a spiritual crisis and depression with pastoral counsel and testimony from his own experience with the same. That Luther too had undergone a crisis of faith and great melancholy surely touched Flacius. They shared not only a confession of faith, then, but an experience of faith. Both had been touched by God through the gospel with healing, and this bore spiritual and emotional fruit. Flacius was a Lutheran, then, not only doctrinally, but existentially. Luther was part of his past and Flacius' personal faith bore the great reformer's fingerprints. This explains why references and appeals to Luther's person, work, and publications abound in Flacius' writings as well as why Luther is often mentioned not only as "Martin Luther," but rather as "Dr. Martin Luther of blessed memory,"<sup>120</sup> as "the honorable master and father Martin Luther,"<sup>121</sup> as "Reverend Father Martin Luther of pious memory,"<sup>122</sup> or similar titles. As a student of the great reformer, Flacius appealed not only to Luther's writings, but also to the reformer's lectures, which he had personally attended.<sup>123</sup> It was for true Lutheranism, Luther's Lutheranism, that Flacius had left behind fatherland, friends, and inheritance, and so he internalized the controversies of Luther's life, especially the contest with Agricola, in which Melanchthon had sought to serve as a mediator and thus failed, in Flacius'

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<sup>119</sup> Dingel, "Flacius als Schüler Luthers und Melanchthons," in *Vestigia Pietatis. Studien zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit in Thüringen und Sachsen*, ed. Gerhard Graf, Hans-Peter Hasse, and Ernst Koch (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2000), 77-93.

<sup>120</sup> For instance, see Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Ai v.

<sup>121</sup> Waremundus, "Eine gemeine Protestation," in *Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim: Der Interimistische Streit (1548-1549)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co., 2010), 162.

<sup>122</sup> Flacius, *Quod Hoc Tempore*, A3 v.

<sup>123</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Aii v.

view, to remain sufficiently steadfast. Luther became, not only a spiritual father for him, but a *Leitbildcharakter*.<sup>124</sup>

As Luther had moderated Melanchthon's wavering during his life, so now it became Flacius' task to limit the damages that Melanchthon's timidity was doing to Luther's theological legacy.<sup>125</sup> He hints at this role of his in *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit* where he compares the current situation to the circumstances at Augsburg. Once again Melanchthon and some of the more timid Wittenbergers needed encouragement and emboldening. Flacius writes there, "At Augsburg, at the Diet in 1530, some wanted to reconcile Christ and Belial in adiaphora, and if Dr. Martin had not at that time been on guard, which one sees in his letters, which are now in print, we now through our own wisdom would not even have a trace of the truth among us."<sup>126</sup> He strives to provide the same corrective to Melanchthon's proclivity to vacillate and moderate Luther's doctrine also in his *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*.<sup>127</sup> A fine example is Flacius' and Melanchthon's relationships with Luther's *De Servio Arbitrio, On the Bondage of the Will*. This was one of Luther's works with which Melanchthon was most uncomfortable. For Flacius, however, it became foundational. In fact, Flacius' desire to defend Luther's teaching in that work drove his obstinacy in the later theological debate over original sin, on account of which the Flacian doctrine of original sin was condemned as excessive in the *Formula of Concord*.<sup>128</sup>

This does not mean, however, that Flacius learned nothing from Melanchthon or that he was ungrateful for Philip's instruction and hospitality in Wittenberg. He frequently admitted his

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<sup>124</sup> Dingel, "Flacius als Schüler," 84, 89.

<sup>125</sup> Dingel, "Flacius als Schüler," 81.

<sup>126</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hiii r.

<sup>127</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Cii r.

<sup>128</sup> Dingel, "Flacius als Schüler," 90.

indebtedness to his former teacher and mentor and his regret at having to contest his error. Moreover, he combined Luther's teaching with Melancthon's methodology, especially in his *Clavis scripturae sacrae*. He commended Melancthon's *Loci*, pairing it even with Luther's *Postille* as an expression and representation of sound Lutheran theology that should be upheld and preserved, and continued to hold it in high esteem.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, he frequently used Melancthon's writing against Melancthon, demonstrating his familiarity and appreciation for his former professor's earlier work.<sup>130</sup> Flacius, thus, bore the imprint of both of his mentors, Luther and Melancthon, so that Dingel asserts, "In no other theologian of the second half of the sixteenth century does one find this synthesis of Melancthon's method and Luther's theology so effectively."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> For instance, see Flacius, *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Miv r.

<sup>130</sup> For instance, see Flacius, *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Piv r.

<sup>131</sup> Dingel, "Flacius als Schüler," 83.

## Flacius' General Argumentation in the Adiaphoristic Controversy

### I. The Nature of Illyricus' Writings

It is helpful at this point to briefly sketch Flacius' main arguments in the Adiaphoristic Controversy against the *Augsburg Interim* and *Leipzig Interim*. Because their titles are quite lengthy in the fashion of his day, for the sake of brevity and clarity they will be noted here by the beginnings of their titles, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*; *Ein Christliche vermanung*; *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*; and *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*. The *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*] for the most part make similar arguments and attacks against Flacius' opponents. The four additional works under consideration are comparable to the *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*] in approach, with the exception of *Breves Symmae Religionis Iesus Christi, & Antichristi*, which presents first Luther's teachings on contested doctrines followed by those of the pope's church. *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen* deals in detail with the essence and proper handling of adiaphora in times of peace and particularly in a time of confession. The *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*] and *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen* serve for the most part a threefold purpose. First, they identify the issues involved in the controversy. Second, they identify the opponents—papists, ambitious magistrates, Adiaphorists—and then analyze and dismantle these opponents' arguments. Third, they urge all true and faithful Christians to remain faithful to Christ and his Scriptures by opposing the *Interims* and those who would impose them by force. The *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*], while similar in content, differ slightly in arrangement, and *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen* is arranged is much more methodically. Regarding its arrangement, Flacius states at the beginning: "I will present this material in an orderly and methodical fashion."<sup>132</sup> He explains:

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<sup>132</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ji v.

I will therefore now divide this book in three parts. In the first part, I will, with the help of Christ, speak about true adiaphora and the Christian ceremonies of the churches, about the reasons for them, and the ultimate benefit flowing from them. In the second part, I will speak about the current false adiaphora, compare the same with true adiaphora, and examine them. In addition, with the help of God, I will demonstrate that the same have neither the origin nor the benefit of true adiaphora, and that one should therefore by no means regard or accept them true adiaphora. In the last part, I will do away with certain meritless arguments of the Adiaphorists.<sup>133</sup>

## II. The Purpose of His Writings

Flacius begins his *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit* by quoting Luther's prediction that "three things will destroy the true religion." These are: "First, ingratitude, that we forget the great benefits that we have received from the dear gospel. Second, the security that is now prevalent and reigns on all sides. Third, human wisdom that wants to bring all things into some sort of order and reform with godless counsel in the name of common peace."<sup>134</sup> The latter, Flacius argues, was precisely what was taking place with the composition and adoption of the *Leipzig Interim*. Under the threat of violence, the emperor and the victorious princes were now attempting to compel the evangelicals to adopt a number of Roman liturgical practices and watered-down theological formulas, all with the Adiaphorists' complicity for the sake of peace. The changes, the Adiaphorists reasoned, could be undone later when fortunes and the political balance had shifted. Flacius found this reasoning self-serving, harmful, and despicable. His writings therefore endeavor to expose the disingenuous and detrimental nature of his opponents' sophistic argumentation.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Ai v. Flacius quotes it again in the same work, Hii r – Hii v.

### III. Flacius' Chief Arguments

Flacius provides the following “General Rule about Ceremonies” in *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, echoed in his other writings:

All ceremonies and church practices are in and of themselves free and they will always be. When, however, coercion, the false illusion that they were worship of God and must be observed, renunciation [of the faith], offense, [or] an opening for godless develops, and when, in whatever way it might happen, they do not build up but rather tear down the church of God and mock God, then they are no longer adiaphora.<sup>135</sup>

He then concludes “All these evil aspects are now in play, except that some things are not even adiaphora, but instead are patently godless.”<sup>136</sup>

Flacius leaves no doubt in *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit* regarding who is to blame for the current crisis. Yes, the papists and the emperor bore much of the guilt, but most disturbing was the fact that those who should be writing such an admonition, and could do so much better than he, were remaining silent or even cooperating outright with the enemies. His former colleagues in Wittenberg had forsaken their holy offices and callings and instead were now attempting to reconcile Christ and Belial, so that one could serve two lords where they ought only have one.<sup>137</sup> Men willing to act in such a way were “epicurean sows” who would rather “persecute Christ with the godless” than “be persecuted by the godless for the sake of Christ.”<sup>138</sup> The Christian religion was not something to be molded to fit the spirit and perils of the time, but must be considered “firm and unchangeable, so that even if someone like Solomon upon his kingly throne should teach or assert something false, it does not nevertheless cease to be false

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<sup>135</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ai v.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Aii r-Aiii v.

<sup>138</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Bi r.

and incorrect on account of the person.”<sup>139</sup> And as if the personal apostasy of these prominent theologians and former friends of Luther were not enough, their example, excuses, and writings were drawing the common people into apostasy with them. Their statements were giving the masses the impression that the changes were not only harmless but salutary, which was an indefensible and damning transgression according to Flacius.<sup>140</sup> It was utterly appalling and shameful that they “dare even to brazenly lie from the pulpit that everything now stands better than before in both secular policy and ecclesiastical governance.”<sup>141</sup>

In Flacius’ opinion there was no debating the only proper response for Christians. They must remain firm and refuse to yield. They must remain unswayed by the spineless sophistry of the Adiaphorists. They must reject the Interims out of hand and at all costs if Luther’s Reformation were to survive. This is, in the end, the primary purpose of the *Admonitions*, to buck up and encourage those taking a stand to remain firm and exhort those who had as of yet not been steadfast to begin to become so. For those who had thus far waffled, Flacius recommends that “there is no better medicine and counsel than a persistent faith, and in this faith hefty, persistent, and unfailing prayer.” This was the only remedy for fear and frailty, because “human counsel, help, and medicine is nothing but work, fidgeting, and anxiety of heart, as David says, which make the sickness worse the more they are employed.”<sup>142</sup> He bids them, “Let us therefore be obedient to our dear God and Father in this cross and follow Christ, his dear Son and all saints in this,” for “he can requite us very richly in this and yonder life.”<sup>143</sup> This reminder, that it does

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<sup>139</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Bii r-Bii v.

<sup>140</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Di v.

<sup>141</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hii v.

<sup>142</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Fiii r.

<sup>143</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Biii v-Biv r.

little good to gain peace in this life at the expense of blessedness in the end, runs throughout Flacius' writings from the Adiaphoristic Controversy and is frequently echoed in the *Magdeburg Confession*. The future of Christ's Church was at stake and a failure of the German Lutherans to take a stand would have repercussions throughout Christendom. "The eyes of all men are upon us," he pleads, "We must therefore concede nothing at all to the devil, nor give any glory to the impious, nor stir up disillusionment among the weak."<sup>144</sup>

It was all or nothing, and Flacius insists that the Lutherans must accept absolutely nothing foisted upon the church by the magistrates. One simply could not confess Christ and accept the *Interim* and consider himself a Christian in Luther's mold, or perhaps of any kind. It was impermissible to make concessions to God's enemies—the Antichrist, the devil, and the impious. It would be much better to offend Caesar tenfold than to forsake Christ, and in the end there really would be no pleasing the emperor through these incremental changes. He would not be happy until the Lutherans were brought back into the papal fold.<sup>145</sup> Christians would suffer innocently for opposing this ploy of Satan and his ilk, but that did not mean they should suffer silently. "The Christian Church is responsible for adding to its innocence and defending its teaching openly in this time too," he counsels, "and it certainly should not and indeed cannot surrender in any way since the adversaries strive against God himself and against justice with the sword and with fire, and persecute our teaching, and try to force us to accept new false doctrine in the place of our teaching...even though it is no secret that our doctrine is clearly the divine truth."<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Flacius, *Quod Hoc Tempore*, B1 r.

<sup>145</sup> Flacius, *Quod Hoc Tempore*, A4 r.

<sup>146</sup> Waremundus, "Eine gemeine Protestation," 144.



The defining Scriptures for Flacius' approach and argumentation are found in St. Paul's letters to the Romans, the Galatians, and his first letter to the Corinthians. Even where not quoted directly, the reader familiar with the New Testament will recognize their influence upon Flacius. He turned to Romans to explain how one should approach differences of practice or sentiment within the church in so far as weaker brethren are concerned. Like Luther before him, Flacius turned especially to Galatians for a defense of Christian freedom, which he felt was being infringed by the new liturgical changes and formulae. 1 Corinthians provided the biblical basis for the teaching of adiaphora, for there Paul wrestled with the early church's conflict over how best to assimilate Jews and Gentiles with their different social cultures and religious backgrounds. 1 Corinthians and Romans both also emphasized for Flacius the importance of good order and a proper balance between Christian freedom and Christian love, so that neither detracts from nor exists in isolation from the other. Flacius himself locates the foundations of the New Testament doctrine of adiaphora as follows:

That such adiaphora are present in the church and her ceremonies can easily be proven from St. Paul, who writes about them in 1 Corinthians 8, 9, 10, and 14. Romans 14 also deals with such adiaphora as there are, for instance, to live married or unmarried (only that they are chaste matters), to eat food or not to eat it, to observe certain days or not to observe them, so long as they avoid superstition in so doing, to take a salary from the hearers or not to take one, and likewise to teach, to hear, and to sing in certain ways in the churches.<sup>147</sup>

Those hoping to properly comprehend and successfully follow Flacius' line of thinking, therefore, do well to study these chapters of Scripture along with Paul's letter to the Galatians, especially the first two chapters.

Finally, Flacius provides three key characteristics of true adiaphora that can permissibly and with edification serve for the good of the church. First, they must spring from the free will of

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<sup>147</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Jii r.

the church. Second, they should be instituted by those who have authority to do so, namely, pastors and legitimate church authorities. Third, and most importantly, they must flow from the general command of God regarding adiaphora.<sup>148</sup> This final requirement meant that Christians must consider not only the things proposed as adiaphora in and of themselves, but also the circumstances surrounding them. In other words, did they carry theological or cultural baggage? What were they associated with? Who was imposing them? This is the chief reason why the adiaphora proposed, advocated for, or defended by various Adiaphorists in the *Leipzig Interim*, other writings, and from the pulpit could not be accepted or deemed true and legitimate adiaphora in the biblical sense. He writes, “God does not want to have ceremonies that have for a long time served for godlessness and have been done away with set up again. He does not only become seriously angry about the godless essence [of ceremonies], but also about all the circumstances surrounding them.” This is the heart and core of Flacius’ resistance to the new liturgical changes being foisted upon the Lutheran churches in Germany by those with neither the proper authority nor spirit to introduce or require them.

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<sup>148</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Liv r.

## **Flacius' Use of Examples from Scripture and Ecclesiastical History**

### I. Reliving the Scriptures and Church History

As a professor of Hebrew, Flacius had an intimate familiarity, not only with the Scriptures as a whole, but specifically with the Old Testament. This evidences itself throughout his writings. While his arguments regarding the doctrine of adiaphora are grounded in the New Testament, especially Paul's letters to the Corinthians and Romans, the lion's share of the examples which illustrate these arguments are from the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. We will now examine some of the examples Flacius employs in his writings, especially those from the Old Testament and Apocrypha, in order to gain a sense for how Flacius used the accounts of the Scriptures and church history for reinforcement of his opinions and as a lens through which to understand contemporary events. For Flacius, contemporary challenges were to be understood, not merely as new experience, but as part of a historical cycle, a new chapter in an ancient and ongoing story that would reach its climax in the last days and culminate in Christ's return.

### II. The Old Testament

By far the most predominant example Flacius employs throughout his pamphlets is the exodus of the Jews from Egypt. Indeed, the exodus was a pattern for the whole history of the Church in Flacius' view: "Now he leads them out of a safe and good position into great danger and need, and then soon he helps them out of their great need and brings them again into a peaceful state."<sup>149</sup> Just as the Jews during the trials of the wilderness longed for the perceived benefits of their earlier life in Egypt and imagined their slavery to have been much better than it really was, so also vacillating Lutherans were imagining better days in the past under the papacy

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<sup>149</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Fi v-Fii r.

and taking for granted the deliverance God had worked through Luther for them from the traditions and legalism of men. Their ingratitude not only matched that of the Jews in the wilderness, therefore, but even excelled it, for the Lutherans had been delivered from a more burdensome and abominable slavery under the papacy, a spiritual servitude.<sup>150</sup> Just as the Jews had despised Moses and Aaron in difficult moments, so also many Lutherans now were despising faithful preachers of God's Word and the sainted reformer.

In a further elaboration of this picture, Flacius' writings cast the pope, emperor, and hostile magistrates as pharaohs for their stubborn refusal to permit the right preaching of the gospel and heed God's commands regarding their offices. Before pleading with the magistrates and religious leaders who were pushing the new changes to cease overstepping their jurisdictions and realms, he addresses them as follows: "Oh you antichrists, oh you pharaohs, oh you foxhounds, who are worse than the Pharaoh himself, you persecutors of the divine Word, you who are the devil's servants, and with him will be martyred in hellish agony and pain, listen, we now speak with you."<sup>151</sup> The Pharaoh of Egypt's demise ought to have been instructive for these opponents of God's Church. Flacius writes, "There have been many a Cain, Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Manasseh, Antiochus, Nero, Mauritius, and Julian, and no matter how strong those who have set themselves up against the Lord and his anointed may be, they will in the end fall off into the abyss of hell."<sup>152</sup>

Continuing his development of this theme, Flacius suggests that in the *Leipzig Interim* the Adiaphorists had set up for themselves and their adherents a new golden calf, just as had

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<sup>150</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Giv r.

<sup>151</sup> Waremundus, "Eine gemeine Protestation," 164.

<sup>152</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hiv r.

happened in the wilderness when Aaron refused to lead boldly as a servant of God. They had “loosed and set the people free from the command, obedience, and fear of God, so that each one dared to do whatever he wanted.”<sup>153</sup> They were like Korah and Dathan, who, ungrateful for God’s deliverance, conspired to lead the Lord’s people back into Egyptian servitude.<sup>154</sup>

Another prominent figure in Flacius’ publications is the prophet Elijah. Irene Dingel points out that throughout the controversy Flacius saw his task, and I would add, the task of all the Magdeburg theologians, like that of Elijah.<sup>155</sup> Moreover, like a number of other Lutherans of his day, he identified Luther as a third Elijah. Explaining the impropriety of the Adiaphorists’ work, he notes, “They grieve the Holy Spirit with a special disgrace, since they reinstitute the ceremonies and practices of the Antichrist, the filth which the Holy Spirit through Dr. Martin Luther, the third Elijah, swept out of the house of God through the inexpressible mercy of God.”<sup>156</sup> Elijah’s confrontation with the prophets of Baal became paradigmatic for the Interim crisis and exposed the folly of the Wittenbergers’ approach. He observes:

Also, when the great prophet Elijah time and again fled from the godless tyranny of Ahab, he did not hand his church over to the wolves of Baal by doing so. Rather, he strengthened it in the truth through his steadfast confession and the pitiable misery he endured. If he had, however, accepted the ceremonies of Baal, painted up the same, and defended them in order to appease the priests of Baal, and only cursorily addressed the abuse in generalities (as the Leipzig theologians’ letter to the preacher of the Margrave Albrecht does), had he wanted to make fine distinctions and serve the times, so that through such moderation (as they now call it) he might assuage the fury of the king...he would have completely betrayed and sold out the church, for the great majority would have thought, “See now, this admirable and great man, whom we regard so highly in our church, limps upon both sides for the sake of peace in order not to upset the king. I therefore may do the same even more compliantly, since I am in no way equal to him.” In this way

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<sup>153</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Aiii v.

<sup>154</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hii v.

<sup>155</sup> Dingel, “Flacius als Schüler,” 91.

<sup>156</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ri r.

they would have been weakened, yielded and imitated him. Jezebel thus would not have had the blood of so many rude Stoics, pigheaded and unruly people in her kingdom to spill, as also this land does not now produce many martyrs.<sup>157</sup>

The Old Testament prophet-for-hire Balaam also makes several appearances in Flacius' writings. The Book of Numbers in chapters 22-24 reports that when Israel was on its way to the Promised Land after escaping Egypt, Balak, the King of Moab, fearful of the advance of God's people, hired Balaam to curse Israel. The Lord, however, would not allow Balaam to do so, which resulted in the famous story of Balaam's ass, who refused to travel the path Balaam directed it upon, because it saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way. Only after cursing and beating the ass and when it finally spoke to him did Balaam realize that it had been protecting him. He thus reported to Balak that he could not curse the Israelites, because God would not permit him. Nevertheless, he did advise the king that perhaps the Israelites could be led into sin against the Lord, particularly with idolatry and sexual immorality, into which the Israelites indeed fell. Similarly, the Adiaphorists were aiding the enemies of God by luring the Lord's people into idolatry and spiritual adultery through their compromises with the papacy. God would help no one curse his teaching, the pure gospel as revealed by Luther, and yet through subtle seduction the compromise formulae and ceremonies of Augsburg and Leipzig were deceiving the faithful into open sin against the very God who had delivered them from papal oppression. Flacius complains, "For we sadly see, may God lament it, that some Jews and Balaams, so wily and unashamed, receive everything laid before them by the godless Ahithophels and dare to drag it into the church."<sup>158</sup> Elsewhere he writes, "Many pious people complain that among them there are many consciences that have become erring, so that they now

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<sup>157</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ti r.

<sup>158</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Eii v.

do not know whether or not they do well to listen to the intrusions of the adiaphoristic Balaam.”<sup>159</sup> And likewise, he seethes that some Adiaphorists “through the help or instigation of Balaam and Ahithophel, forced out two truly God-fearing, steadfast preachers, who were not willing to go along with the new changes.”<sup>160</sup>

Flacius also makes use of the sins of Saul for his purposes. The enemies of the gospel in the Adiaphoristic Controversy were cast as Sauls. Flacius writes that they were like Saul in 1 Samuel 15, when he offered unlawful sacrifice in the misguided notion that it would please God. He explains that, like Saul, “the godless suppose that it matters very little, yes, not at all, to have the correct teaching about God, a proper understanding of his will, and to follow the same. Rather, they place the greatest holiness in this, that we offer much to God and buy him off through our works and gifts.”<sup>161</sup> Saul, together with several other men of the Old Testament, illustrated that, just as in his own day, “even the very best people in the church often become the most evil and shameful, such as Saul, Absalom, Solomon, and the like.”<sup>162</sup> Saul’s experience with David’s godly music was also instructive. Flacius insists that German hymns must be retained in the Evangelical churches because “in this way, young men and women can lead their hearts away from evil thoughts, awaken them to the fear of God, and drive the devil out from them, as we read in the history of Saul.”<sup>163</sup>

Continuing with the Old Testament, Flacius often terms the Adiaphorists “Ahithophels.”

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<sup>159</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Hii r.

<sup>160</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Mii r.

<sup>161</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Cii r.

<sup>162</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Eiii r.

<sup>163</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Oi v- Oi r.

Ahithophel was King David's counselor who went over to Absalom during his rebellion.<sup>164</sup> The Wittenbergers and their allies were doing the same according to Flacius, serving the usurper, Moritz, as well as the emperor, who was overstepping his authority and trampling the Lutherans' religious freedom. Moreover, the current concessions were only stepping-stones to further power grabs. He warns Lutherans and Germans, "Such things demonstrate that the authorities nowhere will indicate how far the changes should stretch and do not want to establish an end goal, but rather day by day more and more is desired and demanded by the impudent Ahithophels."<sup>165</sup> He argues from Psalm 12, "The Holy Spirit prays further, and we should also pray, that the heavenly Father would yet once again root out the false teachers, tongue threshers, and Ahithophels, who fall to the Babylonian whore, her beast, and the great lords, who defiantly defend the unjust, both in spiritual and worldly things."<sup>166</sup> Nevertheless, just as Absalom's rebellion had ended in a defeat hastened by his pride and cunning, so also the current rebellion would end in failure. Man's wisdom could not ultimately triumph over God's will. The Antichrist could not defeat Christ. The Ahithophels would eventually push too far and be toppled by the mighty hand of God.

### III. The Apocrypha

The examples above serve to give the reader a sense of Flacius' use of Old Testament examples and illustrations. Now we will consider a few instances in which Flacius drew from the Apocrypha. The first and most important, which originates with Luther's *Warning*, draws upon

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<sup>164</sup> 2 Samuel 15:12.

<sup>165</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Dii v.

<sup>166</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Eiii r.



the history of the Maccabees, although Flacius focuses especially on the case of Eleazar, the priest, while Luther broadly references Antiochus' tyranny. Flacius retells the account from 2 Maccabees, particularly chapter 6, for the reader: "When a Jewish priest by the name of Eleazar was counseled by a captain of Antiochus at the times of the Maccabees that he should in fact only eat from the Jewish sacrifice but allow the captain to say to his army associates that Eleazar had eaten from the heathen sacrifice, the pious priest was unwilling to approve of the plan and therefore was strangled."<sup>167</sup>

Eleazar, in short, was the perfect anti-Adiaphorist. The Adiaphorists approached their situation entirely differently than this faithful old priest. Flacius describes their pragmatism: "Here an Interimist or Adiaphorist might say that it is only an indifferent thing to eat from the sacrificial flesh or not. Why should I not eat to perpetuate my life for the church and not for my own personal good?"<sup>168</sup> Eleazar, however, would have none of that. He realized that to go along with the captain's ploy would have had disastrous consequences, for himself and his fold. Flacius explains that by cooperating "he in that way would have denied his religion and acted against God's Word with great scandal."<sup>169</sup> The emperor himself was cast as Antiochus, in league with the Antichrist. Flacius protests, "For that reason, since the present ceremonies are being imposed upon the church against its will, not by the common people, but by the most manifest enemies of Christ, namely by the Antichrist and his beast, one can therefore in no way accept them, and they are no longer adiaphora, but the godless mandates of the Antichrist and the bloodthirsty Antiochus."<sup>170</sup> The only proper course for Christian pastors, therefore, was Eleazar's. They too

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<sup>167</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Aiv v-Bi r.

<sup>168</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Bi r.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Liii v.

must resist the captain's sly proposal. They too must avoid giving a false impression, misleading the people, and furthering the enemies' ungodly agenda. Flacius leaves no doubt about this. The reader need not draw his own conclusions.

Just as in the history of Eleazar in 2 Maccabees 6, it would have been Christian for him to have eaten from his sacrificial meat, for such was commanded by God, but since scandal would result from it, and thereby a denial of the faith would have been inferred from it, it would in this way have been entirely and completely unchristian. Therefore, all the God-fearing should guard themselves with all diligence so that they do not make themselves participants in such scandal and [place themselves under] the wrath of God.<sup>171</sup>

Flacius also drew upon the example of Judith from the Apocrypha. Her story illustrated the foolishness of setting timetables for God. In Judith 8:11-17, Judith reprimanded some of the leaders of the Israelites, because, when the people complained about their prospects of surviving a siege and a looming military battle, they urged the people to allow five days for God to respond to their prayers and deliver them before seeking an alternate course. Their intention might well have been earnest, but in limiting God's time to act, even in an attempt to give him more time to act, they erred. God works in his own time, Flacius declares, and the Christian is called, not to set limits, but to wait and trust and pray. He writes, "God does not want (as Judith says) one to prescribe the time and hour when or how He should help us, as our old Adam would like, and is accustomed to do."<sup>172</sup> This was part of the theology of the cross, "that we do not define for our Lord God the time and day of our pleasing, when and how he should help." Rather, "God has his particular plan and his particular way to rescue the oppressed Church, and for many reasons, according to his special plan and thoughts, he sometimes lets it fall into great burdens and remain

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<sup>171</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Qi r.

<sup>172</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Giii v-Giv r.

stuck in them.”<sup>173</sup> The Church was a waiting, expectant people with a promised future but not an appointed date.

#### IV. The New Testament

Flacius does not limit himself to the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, however. He illustrates and undergirds his arguments with examples from the New Testament as well. He appeals occasionally to the life of Jesus, but more often to Christ’s words. One chief example of Flacius’ use of a New Testament account to illustrate his point provides an awareness of how Flacius utilizes the New Testament. Even when he turns to it for illustrative examples, even then he does so predominantly for proof passages and *sedes*. This is clearly seen in the case of Galatians. Flacius drew upon Paul’s rebuke of Peter, which Paul recounts in Galatians 2. This account, however, cannot be separated from the various commands from Paul’s Letter to the Galatians to avoid the traditions of men, new teaching, and most importantly, any new gospel. St. Paul’s warning to the Galatians appears a number of times in Flacius’ pamphlets, where the apostle commands his hearers, “But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.”<sup>174</sup> Flacius’ use of this story to illustrate his point is hardly original, though. Paul himself used the incident with Peter as an illustration of the principles he laid down in the first chapter of Galatians. Flacius merely does the same. The same is likewise true of Flacius’ use of Revelation. The illustrations from that book underscore the warnings and commands provided

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<sup>173</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Ci v.

<sup>174</sup> Galatians 1:8,9 ESV.

there. They are intimately tied together, not only in Flacius' writing, but in the apostle's own.

There is less creativity, then, in Flacius' use of these New Testament accounts and images than in his use of the Old Testament, Apocrypha, and church history.

To return to the example from Galatians, why had Paul rebuked Peter? Paul explains:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"<sup>175</sup>

Peter had compromised the pure and clear message of the gospel. It is no coincidence that the next part of Galatians treats again the Pauline doctrine of justification by grace through faith.

Paul insists in verse 21, "I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose."<sup>176</sup> So too in his day Flacius was convinced that the gospel

was being nullified by the requirements and ambiguities contained in the *Leipzig Interim*. It diminished and clouded the work of Christ, the proof of God's love for the world. It muddied

faith's proper focus upon the only Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, whose

name was the only name under heaven given to men for salvation, the one bread from heaven,

who was the vivifying righteousness of God for all sinners who hunger.<sup>177</sup> This was the great

threat and tragedy of the *Interims*, which threatened to lead the redeemed back once again into

slavery to sin, like a dog returning to vomit or a sow to the mud.<sup>178</sup> The very core of the Christian

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<sup>175</sup> Galatians 2:8-14 ESV.

<sup>176</sup> Galatians 2:21 ESV.

<sup>177</sup> Flacius, *Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi*, A2 v.

<sup>178</sup> Flacius, *Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi*, A3 r.

faith was at stake. The chief article, the doctrine of justification, the article upon which the church stands or falls, was being challenged, watered down, and thus nullified, for it was all Christ or not enough Christ in Flacius' and Luther's teaching. Similar is Paul's use of the account of the circumcision of Timothy and his subsequent refusal to have Titus circumcised. Once again the freedom of the gospel and the clarity of the doctrine of justification was at stake. In quoting this account, Flacius again uses a biblical example from the New Testament that is first used by Paul, the author himself, in an illustrative manner and for which Paul himself supplies an attendant explication within the context of its original use in Galatians 2.<sup>179</sup>

Flacius provides additional examples from the life of St. Paul. Once again, though, these are often tied to applications that Paul himself makes, with few exceptions. For instance, he notes that the Magdeburgers shouldn't be accused of causing an uproar or division, just as Paul could not honestly be blamed for the uproar caused by his godly teaching in Jerusalem and Ephesus.<sup>180</sup> Moreover, just as Paul continued to encourage the Ephesians, even after he had to flee, with prayer and his letter to them, so also faithful pastors should continue to look after their flocks, even if forced to leave. Indeed, as it was better that Paul fled than stayed, if staying would have meant compromising the truth of God, so also, if a pastor's option were to stay and receive the new ceremonies or leave in protest, Flacius insists the latter is the faithful, biblical route.<sup>181</sup> These are two of a very few instances, though, where Flacius' use of an example from Paul's life isn't tied to Paul's own application and interpretation of that event.

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<sup>179</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Tiii r.

<sup>180</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Div v.

<sup>181</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ti r-Ti v.

### V. Church History

Moving beyond the time of the New Testament Scriptures, Flacius also utilizes events from ecclesiastical history. He recounts the botched martyrdom of a number of Christians under the Emperor Valens, an Arian—he makes use especially of persecution related to Arianism. When the Christians refused to back down in the face of an ambush commanded by the emperor, the captain charged with seeing that these believers were strangled refused to carry out his orders. His refusal sprang from his contact with a pregnant woman who was hurrying to the church. When the captain informed her that those at the church were going to be strangled, she replied to him, “I have indeed heard that and that is precisely why I am hurrying over there with my child, so that we might die together with the other Christians and become martyrs.”<sup>182</sup> Flacius argues that if the Lutherans in his day would show the same courage and steadfastness they might meet similar results. Flacius recalls Athanasius’ unwavering resolve in the face of numerous exiles on account of his rejection of the Arian heresy. Athanasius did not abandon his flock through his steadfastness. He would have abandoned them, rather, had he not held firm to the Word of God. Like Paul, when he was forced to flee Ephesus, Athanasius “through his prayer, writings, steadfast confession, pitiable misery, and his various crosses strengthened them and taught the Christian Church even up unto our own day.”<sup>183</sup> Flacius contrasts the refusal of Christians in the early church to offer incense to the emperor with the Adiaphorists’ willingness to cooperate in much more significant ways with the Antichrist himself.<sup>184</sup> He laments, “In previous times it would have been a very intense slander of someone even if one had only

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<sup>182</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Gii r.

<sup>183</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ti v.

<sup>184</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Cii r.

alleged his falling away with two or three grains of incense. Now, however, even if one transforms the whole Christian Church into the abomination of the Antichrist, it still ought not be called a denial.”<sup>185</sup> He points his readers to Book 7 of Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, which covers the era of imperial persecution of the Christian Church, the famous era of martyrdom, which included the shameful folly of those who lapsed. Echoing the *Te Deum*, he urges, “We should in these things consider and imitate the example of the holy prophets, our dear Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the holy martyrs, who in previous times and even gave up their lives for the Word of God.”<sup>186</sup> In other words, Christians should follow the pattern of the one true Church that had existed from the Old Testament, through the New Testament, and into the present day.

## VI. Conclusion

Flacius made ample use of examples from the Scriptures, the Apocrypha, and church history. However, he made more use of the Old Testament, and indeed, perhaps even the Apocrypha, than the New Testament for creative illustrative purposes. This is partly because the examples he used from the New Testament were already tied by the original authors to their application. This is also likely because the Old Testament and Apocrypha provided more abundant examples of resistance to tyranny and the ungodly commands of those in power. Flacius also made use of church history. The examples chosen from church history served to illustrate the willingness of true Christians to suffer rather than to sin or compromise the Word of God. These examples did not provide the same instances of active resistance to governing authorities as could be found in the Old Testament, but they did demonstrate passive resistance,

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<sup>185</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Qiii v.

<sup>186</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Di r.

the willingness to suffer and die in order to obey God rather than men, as the *clausula Petri* demanded.



## The Apocalypse and the End of Luther's Reformation in Germany

### I. Life in the End Times

Matthias Flacius Illyricus, like Christians of almost every age, considered himself living in the end times. In Christian theology indeed all time since Christ's ascension has been the end times. All that remains is Christ's return. Like Luther, Flacius did not think his Savior's return could be far off, given the great commotion in the world and the open persecution of the gospel which he decried. He was not ignorant, however, of earlier ages in which the end had appeared near. He did not rule out that this might be a similar testing of the Christ's Church, which would be followed by a continued history for this world. Flacius' understanding of the cyclical nature of ecclesiastical history—times of particular testing followed by times of more relative ease—can be seen in a number of places, most prominently in *Ein Vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, which begins with a review of such cycles in the Old Testament and Apocrypha. “So also, it appears that the dear gospel of Christ has a different status at one time than at another,” he observes.<sup>187</sup> The exodus, Flacius argues in the same work, “has always been a figure and pattern of the entire Church and all Christians, for God the Lord always leads His own in a wonderful manner.”<sup>188</sup> He elaborates on his view of church history even further in the pages that follow. This is important to remember, because some might dismiss Flacius' writings on account of their apocalyptic nature, which definitely would be unfitting. His arguments still merit the historian's attention. They are not defunct or unimportant because they were written by a man who thought the end near. In fact, we might be able to learn even more about the man and his colleagues precisely because he thought Judgment Day on the horizon. What more reason could there be to examine

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<sup>187</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Giv v.

<sup>188</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Fi v-Fii r.

oneself, to state one's convictions, to reveal one's allegiances and worldview than the prospect of standing before one's Maker? This is evident in Flacius' constant appeals to conscience, both his own and those of his opponents. He begins *Ein Christliche vermanung*, for example, with an emphatic insistence that he had a good conscience in this venture.<sup>189</sup> On the contrary, his opponents had a bad conscience, as he demonstrates from Caspar Cruciger's deathbed soul-searching.<sup>190</sup> And so, as we explore Flacius' apocalypticism, we dare not shrug off his opinions and beliefs on that account.

## II. God's End Times Enemies: Devil and Antichrist

Flacius makes regular allusion to imagery from the Revelation of St. John. Whether referring to the papacy as the Antichrist or speaking about the whore of Babylon, the enemies of Luther's doctrine (or those whom Flacius perceived as such) are clearly painted in apocalyptic hues. They are not merely enemies who pose contemporary dangers. They are manifestations of the constant enmity and danger faced by Christ's Church, whose opposition and hostility it will only escape through Christ's return. The man of lawlessness of 2 Thessalonians was at work within Christianity. The devil, who could not overcome the Church through his fury, was now busying himself infiltrating it as an angel of light, introducing corrupting changes under the pretext of piety.<sup>191</sup> Flacius expounds, "The old serpent could adorn himself in a stately fashion not only at the time of Eve but also in these times, as he appears under the facade of holiness above measure, bringing forth smooth and sweet words. In the back, though, is his black,

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<sup>189</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Aiv v.

<sup>190</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Bii v- Biii r.

<sup>191</sup> Flacius, *Quod Hoc Tempore*, A2 r.

poisonous, dragon's tail, together with eternal condemnation."<sup>192</sup> Flacius suggests to his readers that the fact that the same old enemies are at it again should be both comforting and alarming for the Christian. It is comforting because church history in Flacius' view is the tale of God's deliverance of his Christians from such enemies and yet alarming in that these are formidable foes with much experience in their ungodly labor.

Illyricus identifies the chief enemy as the devil. And the devil is no dolt. He is sly, patient, and shrewd. He does not limit himself to the devilish, but works sometimes most effectively, as at Flacius' time, through churches and liturgies themselves. His greatest successes not infrequently take place through what is presented as piety. This explains Flacius' special venom for the Adiaphorists, those evangelicals who were cooperating in the changes mandated by the *Interim*. Their cooperation lent the alterations, or adulterations, as Flacius preferred to call them, the guise of propriety and theological warrant and sanction. Why would they do this? They had underestimated the wiles of the devil and themselves been beguiled by the old evil foe through the papists and the emperor. Unlike Flacius, they had not discerned the devil's ploy to work through the church against the Church. Flacius explains, "The devil strives all the time to commence his wickedness in a little and insignificant thing, but plans to move forward gradually as far as he can, so that we slowly surrender our ability to back out, having dealt with the devil and his works in a friendly manner."<sup>193</sup> This, he notes, was precisely how the devil had operated with Eve, and it was how he now was duping the Adiaphorists, who should have learned from Eve's example. Elsewhere he compares the devil's tactics to a wedge, "which in the front is thin and sharp in the leading edge, so that one does not suppose, were it pounded into wood, that it

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<sup>192</sup> Henetus, "Ein kurzer Bericht vom Interim," in *Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim: Der Interimistische Streit (1548-1549)*, ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht GmbH & Co., 2010), 99.

<sup>193</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Dii v.

would be able to break it apart very much.” That is the deception and “yet, although it is very thin at the point, it does not on that account make any less of an entrance for the thickness that follows, and so proceeds in such a way that, after the first part is in, the other will follow closely after it until at last the wood is entirely split.”<sup>194</sup> The splitting of the wood would mean nothing else than the end of Luther’s Reformation, at least in Germany.

While the devil is the Church’s greatest and most perplexing foe in Flacius’ literature, perhaps no enemy appears more often than the Roman papacy, identified by Flacius, as by Luther, as the Antichrist. Quite naturally, the pope wanted Luther’s Reformation done and over. While Lutheran theology has historically made a distinction between the papacy and the pope himself as the Antichrist, no such distinction is evident in Flacius’ writings. The pope is the clear enemy of Christ’s Church and biblical doctrine and must be resisted at all costs. Even the smallest concessions compromise the whole of scriptural teaching. Even seemingly harmless liturgical practices become an enormous threat when readopted in deference to Rome. “They take a clear step toward reestablishing the papacy, for the ceremonies are the foremost foundation of the papacy and the greatest worship of God among the papists are just plain ceremonies.”<sup>195</sup> The devil, therefore, together with the whole papacy, was in the liturgical details. Moreover, allowances toward the papacy would mislead and confound the common people, so that they would think, “O, the devil is not as dark as one paints him. The pope is not as bad as Doctor Luther made him out to be, for otherwise why would such great men permit uniformity with the Antichrist? Since Doctor Luther was quarrelsome and overdid it, why should we want to follow him? Why should we not compromise a little for the sake of peace and the common

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<sup>194</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Di v.

<sup>195</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Oii v-Oiii r.

good?”<sup>196</sup> This was a real threat, because “our teachers have hardly been able to root out all the abuses [from the past so far], although they have rooted out the foundation.”<sup>197</sup> “When the papists now have these advantages,” Flacius asks, “who can doubt that after that, when Sidonius and other ravenous papistic wolves and bears fall upon us, they will easily smother us, and thus drag the whole papacy into the church?”<sup>198</sup> For this reason Flacius maintains that “the adiaphoristic devils”—those granting the papists increasing advantages through their yielding—“are nothing other than the forerunner of the great devil, who is the originator and lord of the entire papacy.”<sup>199</sup> They were pawns of the pope, the Antichrist, and his lord, the devil. You cannot reason with such enemies, you must oppose them from the outset and in every way. This ought not surprise anyone, Flacius makes clear. God’s Word has already revealed as much. “Daniel and Revelation say that the Antichrist, after he has been revealed and weakened,” which was Luther’s work, “will try to set up again his former honor and power with the help and assistance of the powerful.”<sup>200</sup>

The title of Thomas Kaufmann’s magisterial monograph, *Das Ende der Reformation*, summarizes well the threat Flacius deemed posed by the Adiaphoristic formula of Leipzig.<sup>201</sup> In 1524 Luther wrote in *To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools*:

O my beloved Germans, buy while the market is at your door; gather in the

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<sup>196</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Pi r.

<sup>197</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Oiii r.

<sup>198</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Di r.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Civ r.

<sup>201</sup> Thomas Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

harvest while there is sunshine and fair weather; make use of God's grace and word while it is there! For you should know that God's word and grace is like a passing shower of rain which does not return where it has once been. It has been with the Jews, but when it's gone it's gone, and now they have nothing. Paul brought it to the Greeks; but again when it's gone it's gone, and now they have the Turk. Rome and the Latins also had it; but when it's gone it's gone, and now they have the pope. And you Germans need not think that you will have it forever, for ingratitude and contempt will not make it stay. Therefore, seize it and hold it fast, whoever can; for lazy hands are bound to have a lean year.<sup>202</sup>

Flacius had taken this warning to heart. He firmly believed that the gospel would move on if taken for granted. What stunned him was such ingratitude so soon after Luther's death, but as noted earlier, that was the pattern in the history of the Christian Church. The gospel assumed is the gospel lost. It was just a matter of time. Flacius explains, "Help, dear God! How can the people be so epicurean, yes, become so entirely brutish that they throw God and eternal life to the winds and despise it? They have continually clamored that they want to change something for the sake of peace and unity. Yes, they want to have peace and unity with the Babylonian whore and its gruesome beast."<sup>203</sup> He laments that God would ask, "Why has the faithful city so shamefully become a whore?"<sup>204</sup> The threat looms perilously and imminently: "For the devil certainly prowls around through his servants the papists, Interimists, and Adiaphorists, so that through your wavering he might draw all churches back again to the papacy."<sup>205</sup> He complains:

What horrible ingratitude it is, which our Lord God will yet earnestly and heavily punish, that we forget and are ungrateful for such revealed grace and kindness, that we are unwilling, in order to maintain the pure teaching, not only to lose our life, but also our goods, and that we do not want to do without or lack even the tiniest bit from our income and profit, but rather to continue to buy and sell, as it stands in Revelation 13. We take the sign of the beast on our foreheads and pray to his image, that is, so that we may ply our wares, we accept the Interim and

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<sup>202</sup> LW 45:352-353.

<sup>203</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Bi v.

<sup>204</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Hi r.

<sup>205</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Hi r.

submit to all godless things.<sup>206</sup>

### III. A War on Christ Himself

Flacius clarifies that the war against the Christians is not merely that. It is a war against Christ himself—a final great battle between God and the devil, the Savior and the beast. Repeatedly Flacius states that Christ himself is persecuted, taken captive, and crucified in the person of his people. He appeals to the Duke of Saxony, Augustus, the brother of Moritz, who himself would become the Elector of Saxony in 1553, “to see to it that you tame the Epicurean, the destroyer of the religion of Christ, and hold yourself to the Christian religion.” He warns the duke to take care especially “so that it may not be truthfully said in foreign places, such as in Denmark and other kingdoms, that through domestic war nothing else has been accomplished except that Christ himself, together with the pious prince, was captured and exiled from the land.”<sup>207</sup> John Frederick, whose electoral title Augustus’ brother had received from the emperor for joining forces against his cousin, was the pious prince who would be captive and exiled together with the Lord Jesus Christ himself should the duke not be careful. Elsewhere he cries out, “Oh how hard the swift threats of our Lord Christ strike us now—‘Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!’—we who are pushing away the Christ who is so clearly depicted before our eyes or want to crucify him again.”<sup>208</sup> He explains the Adiaphorists’ cooperation with the emperor’s demands thus, “They are anxious that the Romans perhaps might come and take their land and people and therefore they are willing to crucify Christ, that is, they fear men more than

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<sup>206</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Civ r.

<sup>207</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Bi r-Bi v.

<sup>208</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hiii r- Hiii v.

God.”<sup>209</sup> The devil’s wrath, expressed through the Antichrist and his minions, was not limited to Christians. No, “from their deeds and profanity one can well establish that this is such a war in which the hellish devil himself persecutes the poor Christians with especial hatred, yes, rants and rages against the Lord Christ himself.”<sup>210</sup>

This was not mere purposeful hyperbole on Flacius’ part either. It was his sincere conviction. He honestly held that Christ was being persecuted, crucified again, by the open enemies of the Lutheran churches and those members of it who worked with the enemies. Christ was inseparable from his Church. The two were bound intimately together. And so his insistence that Christ himself was wronged when his church was victimized serves a dual purpose. It illustrates the heinous and devilish nature of the Adiaphorists’ conciliation of the Antichrist and his accomplices and emboldens those Christians who were under siege. Christ was with them. They bore Christ’s cross and Christ would not abandon them under their crosses. Flacius counsels, “Inasmuch as we have been so born and called to faith in Christ, we should expect much adversity and carry the cross of Christ. It is a small thing that we patiently suffer such misfortune, and we ought not trouble ourselves too much and thus through foolish and godless fear and worry make the misfortune greater.”<sup>211</sup> A later section of this thesis will cover the suffering of the church militant and Flacius’ theology of the cross, but it is worth noting this connection here because it reinforces the nature of the battle Flacius was watching play out in his time: a cosmic battle between good and evil, Christ and Satan—the battle foretold in Revelation, the culmination of the end times. What was happening was “taking place through those persons

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<sup>209</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Riv r.

<sup>210</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Di v-Dii r.

<sup>211</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Aiv r.



about whom the Holy Spirit has previously prophesied would storm the kingdom of Christ and earnestly prohibit us from obeying him, namely the whore of Babylon and the beast upon whom the whore rides.”<sup>212</sup> Christ was fighting the beast. The Savior who suffered with his Christians also struggled together with them and in the end they, with him, would emerge victorious. Therefore, Flacius explains, “I also condemn and separate myself not only from the Babylonian harlot and its beast, but also from the image and signs of the beast, about which it is written in Revelation.”<sup>213</sup> This was precisely the great tragedy of what the Adiaphorists were doing. Exactly when they ought to have been leading the charge and sounding the battle cry, they were making peace with Christ’s ultimate enemies. Flacius grumbles, “I shrink back with my whole heart from the present horrid and entirely diabolic harlotry taking place with the Babylonian harlot.” His former colleagues, instead of fighting the good of fight, were rather toiling “in order to reconcile themselves to the Antichrist, together with his beast, so that the cross might not be laid on them... for the sake of Christ.”<sup>214</sup>

#### IV. Signs and Visions

In keeping with his apocalyptic viewpoint, Flacius also makes use of recent signs and visions to reinforce his case (126). He devotes several pages to a number of these phenomena in *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*.<sup>215</sup> He alludes to a prophecy from Nuremberg. He cites earlier prophecies of Melchtilde, an eleventh century female mystic, and Hildegard, a twelfth century female mystic. He points out that three suns were seen on the twenty-first of March and three

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<sup>212</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Tiv r.

<sup>213</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Uiii v.

<sup>214</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Uiv r.

<sup>215</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Civ v-Dii v.

moons that same evening. Moreover, there had been particularly ominous and arrogant boasts from the enemies which would surely fall back upon them. Thunder had been battering and to some extent remained in the areas the enemy had occupied. And finally, a medical student who had stayed as a boarder with the sister-in-law of one of the authors of the *Augsburg Interim*, Johann Agricola, had died after expressing his strong support for the emperor. While dying, however, he recanted and prophesied “extremely terrible things and threatened by name those who had led the foreigners into Germany or had helped in any way to allow innocent blood to be shed in Germany.”<sup>216</sup> This is not the only time Flacius makes use of such a deathbed conversion and vision either. In *Ein Christliche vermanung* he devotes several pages to the deathbed recantation of Cruciger, who had cooperated in the formulation of the Leipzig Interim and in death declared, “I have spoken incorrectly. God be my witness, I have spoken incorrectly.”<sup>217</sup>

### V. Conclusion

As has been seen, Flacius’ writings contain clear apocalyptic elements. These elements do not essentially define his works, but they do undergird and lend them a sense of urgency. The devil and the Antichrist, who had been revealed by Martin Luther, were making their final assault—at least it seemed—upon the Christian Church. They were frantically battling against the newly restored and rejuvenated preaching of the gospel ushered in by the Reformation. This might well be but another chapter in a long church history of struggles and persecutions, but Flacius liberally employed the imagery of St. John’s Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation, to describe and interpret it. The fate and legacy of Luther’s Reformation in Germany was at stake.

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<sup>216</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Dii r.

<sup>217</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Biii r.

Judgment Day was drawing near. It was impossible for Flacius to imagine anything more being at stake. There was no time to spare. The clock was ticking down. Christians therefore needed to do what Christians have always been called to do: stand firm and confess Christ and the Christian faith.

## The Foolish Remnant with Eternal Perspective

### I. The Tiny Flock

Flacius writes of the church of his day that “this remnant of believers, otherwise in all respects entirely trifling and weak, is persecuted in a hostile manner by many thousands of devils, by the papists, interims, and the traitor Judas.”<sup>218</sup> The Judas is likely Moritz, the so-called Judas of Meissen, so named because he sided with the emperor against his cousin and fellow Lutherans of the Schmalkaldic League. The object of our interest here, though, is that “remnant of believers.” Flacius was convinced that God’s Church would almost always be a remnant. Even when churches swelled and were adorned with various glorious ornamentations, the true Church was often but a fragment, a small invisible *ecclesiola* within a perhaps more impressive visible *ecclesia*, though not in any puritanical sense. The Church in Flacius’ thought is “the little flock of the Lord.”<sup>219</sup> Noting that the Adiaphorists and other opponents had failed to listen, Flacius states, “I, however, since one admonishes them to no avail, will only admonish the little sheep of Christ who are still remaining in Meissen and elsewhere to guard themselves most carefully from the papistic, interimistic, and adiaphoristic, and flee and in no way receive all the adulterations of the recognized and true doctrine of Christ, be they as they may.”<sup>220</sup> We see here, and throughout his works, Flacius’ conception of the true Church as a percentage of those claiming to be Christians, often a tiny minority of those who call themselves Christians. There was a reason that Jesus called the road to hell wide. The masses would walk it, even race down it. The road to heaven was narrow, its pilgrims few.

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<sup>218</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Oiii v.

<sup>219</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Riv v.

<sup>220</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Biv r-Biv v.

## II. The Foolish Flock

Not only are true Christians frequently few in number according to Flacius' theology, but they are often unimpressive, unlettered, and unsophisticated. In fact, Flacius sometimes presents this lack of sophistication as a virtue. Again and again in his pamphlets, Flacius praises the laity in contrast to the clergy. His praise focuses upon the laity's adherence to the plain meaning of the Word of God and their suspicion regarding the recent, poisonous changes. In *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen* Flacius twice notes that the laity were rightly skeptical of the reintroduction of old practices. He blames their possible apostasy upon the learned who abuse their reputations to mislead and confuse the simple. First, he cautions, "For the laity, who hate the papacy like the devil himself, want to have no part of the abused, corrupted ceremonies that they must see in the church, and they thus regard all ceremonies and church usages, and even the entire religion, as trifling, and altogether despise it."<sup>221</sup> Second, he warns, "Therefore, the poor laity, especially in temptation and crosses, do not necessarily buy into such subtle arguments, but because they look more upon the person than upon the words, they put their trust in the person more for the sake of his reputation than his words."<sup>222</sup> In both instances, it is the simple faithful at risk because of the learned and sophisticated unfaithful. Flacius maintains that if the Church is to persevere, the laity must be admonished, encouraged, emboldened, and reassured, as he strove to do with his *Admonitions* [*Vermanung*].

There is a tension between wisdom and folly in Flacius' works. St. Paul's teaching from 1 Corinthians 1 runs throughout. Flacius writes, "What he said certainly is to be marked well, for

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<sup>221</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Oii r.

<sup>222</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Pii v-Piii r.

our Lord God has a special way and manner for ruling and preserving the entire world, and especially his Church, that is entirely contrary to human wisdom.”<sup>223</sup> Man’s thoughts must bow where God’s thoughts stand revealed and even when God is hidden the Christian dare not prove himself so haughty as to try to divine the Lord’s purposes outside of what Scripture has made known: “Our Lord God wants the human race to esteem his ways and counsel highly, follow it, judge itself according to it, and not ask how or why such happens, and what result will be accomplished by it. In particular he wants us to entrust every affair and all our life and care to him.” All the Christian needs to know is God’s promise that the Lord will work all things for good in the end.<sup>224</sup> True wisdom is God’s wisdom. Man’s wisdom, on the contrary, is prone to overstepping its bounds, twisting the truth for its convenience, and forsaking the love of one’s neighbor. Reason has its place, but it must remain faith’s handmaiden and not its master. Dr. Martin himself had warned against navigating by reason.<sup>225</sup> It is an unreliable guide, for wisdom divorced from Christ, God’s Wisdom, is folly and this “foolishness of men, their blindness and perverse nature, is so great that, while they cannot grasp the things that belong to God, they pay attention much more attentively to earthly and transitory things (which can help us little, as experience itself teaches us) rather than to that which is from God, to the divine teaching, and to those things which God has promised in it.”<sup>226</sup>

### III. Life through an Eternal Lens: The Case against the Epicureans

Not only is Flacius’ remnant often small in number and insignificant in stature, but it is

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<sup>223</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Biv r.

<sup>224</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Biv r.

<sup>225</sup> Flacius, *Quod Hoc Tempore*, A3 r.

<sup>226</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Cii v.

heavenly-oriented. It is focused not only upon this life and its goods and goals, but upon the eternity promised by Christ. In fact, Flacius exposes one of the chief dangers facing Christians in his day as a willingness to compromise heavenly doctrine for earthly peace, spiritual truth for temporal well-being. Flacius writes, “This present world therefore errs when it assumes that a Christian will have all good days here, for Christ himself has said, ‘You will have angst in this world, but peace in me.’”<sup>227</sup> The Adiaphorists, however, had either forgotten this or disregarded it outright. He asks rhetorically, “Should then the Church, which Christ has redeemed with his blood for the praise of his Father in heaven, shame and blaspheme God for the sake alone of bodily rest and good days?”<sup>228</sup> He warns of the temptation being presented to simple Christians under the pretense that they “will bring good order, proper discipline, reconciliation, and peace of the belly and the world, and clearly do not know what serves the divine good.”<sup>229</sup> He observes, “The most important reason why almost everyone is stuck in error now is the god which one calls the belly and the life that one calls good and peaceful. . . . Such a god grows at a furious pace, even among those who perhaps have been somewhat God-fearing in the past.”<sup>230</sup> Such was the peril facing the little flock of Christ. The simple were being duped by the learned, who were choosing good days here over the heaven won for them by Christ. The insignificant were being oppressed by the powerful and through threats and hollow promises wooed away from the true Christian faith and confessional faithfulness.

The concern for the belly mentioned above is elsewhere described as epicureanism. Flacius utilizes few identifying adjectives more frequently than “epicurean.” And nowhere is his

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<sup>227</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Ei v.

<sup>228</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ri r- Ri v.

<sup>229</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Diii r.

<sup>230</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Aii r.

assault on the epicureanism he perceived in the course of action adopted by the Adiaphorists and those who were going along with them more pronounced than in the preface to *Ein Christliche vermanung*, addressed to Augustus, Duke of Saxony. He begins it by retelling Jesus' lament of Jerusalem before his passion, when the Savior said, "If you knew what would serve for your peace."<sup>231</sup> The situation in Flacius' age equates closely, he contends. Just as the Jewish leaders had argued that it was best for Jesus, one man, to die, in order to keep peace with the Romans, so also now the little flock of Christ was being sacrificed in order to keep peace with the Holy Roman Emperor. The root of the problem was impatience and a lack of faith. When God failed to send help immediately and in the way desired, many despaired. Flacius explains, "Some, however, go so far as to surmise that there must be no God, or no more divine counsel available, and therefore have become entirely godless, associating themselves with those for whom things go best and grandest in this present life, thus assuming an epicurean way of life more and more each day."<sup>232</sup>

Flacius often joins the adjective "epicurean" with another word. Some were not only "epicurean," but "epicurean sows." In his preface dedicated to Duke Augustus of Saxony, the brother of Moritz, Flacius put the following words, clearly intended as a warning for the court at Meissen, into the mouth of Christ as he looked down upon Jerusalem before his passion: "O, you fools, have your wise and your teachers of the law become such entirely epicurean sows that they dare to think that someone can achieve peace between the wrathful God and sinning men! O, you godless, dunderheaded city, this very thing will be the chief cause of your ruin!"<sup>233</sup> This

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<sup>231</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Aii r; Luke 19:42.

<sup>232</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Ci v.

<sup>233</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Aii v.



language is not original with Flacius. In *Against the Roman Papacy as an Institution of the Devil*, for example, Luther had written, “Do you hear, Pope Paul, first of all you have no faith, and you and your sons, the cardinals and the curia’s riffraff, do not honor God, for you are Epicurean sows, just like all the popes, your predecessors.”<sup>234</sup> Luther regularly termed contempt for the Word of God epicureanism. Lauterbach’s *Table Talk* has Luther commenting, “How great is the presumption and security of the world! Whoever thinks he’s something dares to scoff at Christ and lift his foot against him. It’ll get even worse; epicureanism will make great headway. For contempt of the Word, which is characteristic of this world and believes neither in God nor in a life to come, is nothing else than a preparation for epicureanism before the last day.”<sup>235</sup> Viet Dietrich records a similar statement.<sup>236</sup> Flacius, thinking that last day at hand, surely found affirmation in such statements of the reformer, perhaps even having heard some from the mouth of the old and increasingly pessimistic reformer himself in person in Wittenberg. In *The Bondage of the Will* Luther attacked Erasmus with words that could have been spoken by Flacius against the Interimists: “By such tactics you only succeed in showing that you foster in your heart a Lucian, or some other pig from Epicurus’ sty who, having no belief in God himself, secretly ridicules all who have a belief and confess it.”<sup>237</sup> Flacius would similarly write later, “Now let the epicurean sows, the Interimists and Adiaphorists, scorn the wrath and threatening of God as they will, regard all this blasphemous depravity as little, simple, pure adiaphora, until they at last finally fall under the punishment of God.”<sup>238</sup> Finally, in a letter to Wenceslas Link Luther wrote

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<sup>234</sup> LW 41:287.

<sup>235</sup> LW 54:255-256.

<sup>236</sup> LW 54:69.

<sup>237</sup> LW 33:24.

<sup>238</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Biv r.

of the end times, “Now is the time which was predicted to come after the fall of Antichrist, when people will be Epicureans and atheists, so that the word of Christ might be fulfilled: ‘As it was in the days of Noah and Lot, so will it be on the day of the arrival of the Son of Man.’”<sup>239</sup> Once again, the impending last day necessitated clear, blunt language for Luther, and the same was true for Flacius, who certainly saw in the circumstances of his day a fulfillment of the prophecies of Luther, the third Elijah. Here, then, when Flacius unflatteringly classifies a lack of trust in God in tribulation, attempts to circumvent the cross and suffering through human wisdom, and an overriding desire for temporal peace and well-being, he merely adopts the language of his spiritual father, Martin Luther. Even more, for the most part, he employs such language against his enemies less vehemently than Luther did, although not without fervor and sting.

Flacius demands that Christians in this life focus not merely on their earthly welfare, but above all upon their eternal salvation. Again and again Flacius calls upon his fellow Christians to refocus their perspective and rearrange their priorities. What good would it be, after all, to lose heaven for a little peace on earth? And yet the temporal is not unimportant in Flacius’ view. It is not wrong to pray for our daily bread, as the Lord’s Prayer and Luther’s Catechism encourage. Rather, the Christian must be sure to do so in the right frame of mind. He explains “The temporal, however, such as body and life, good health, peace, money and goods, etc., we should always pray for with the distinction and condition that they might serve to God’s glory and for our own and other’s salvation and well-being.” In doing so, he continues, we must “place ourselves under the will of God, who may will that we should take up the cross, but with the hope that he will save us, just as Christ himself places himself under the will of his Father, when he says, ‘Father, if it is possible, may this cup pass by me, but not what I will, but what you

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<sup>239</sup> LW 50:243-244.

will.”<sup>240</sup>

The appeal to Christ’s petition in Gethsemane is important. Luther’s flock, like Christ, faced a dilemma. Surely Christians, like their Christ, desire to avoid suffering if it is possible according to God’s will, but never, Flacius insists, if it is contrary to God’s will or honor. This was Lutheranism’s Gethsemane. God’s remnant’s cross awaited and it would be sin and apostasy to refuse it. It was one thing for God to remove it. It was another thing entirely to flee it. This was no time to plot “whereby one might wiggle himself out of danger and need and increase his own goods and honor.”<sup>241</sup> Flacius’ theology of the cross and convictions concerning the church militant will be explained further in the next chapter, but it is helpful here to see how each of these themes fits together. They are indeed inseparable. Not only is God’s true Church a remnant, but it is a remnant in the end times called to carry its cross, as the Church has done in every age.

Flacius argues that the devil strives for victory by turning the hearts of Christ’s little flock’s. Jesus said, after all, in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”<sup>242</sup> Flacius therefore warns, “It is better for the goods, body, and assembly of the God-fearing to be disturbed than for consciences. The spiritual wolf, the devil and false teachers, does not devour the sheep of Christ until he has made it adherent to him with its heart.”<sup>243</sup> In a section on the steps the faithful should take to preserve the peace in a godly fashion, Flacius points out that there are human means through which the little flock of Christ can yet work. Not all human strategy was wrong, therefore. This strategy, though, was once again framed by the eternal.

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<sup>240</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Gii r.

<sup>241</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Aii v-Aiii r.

<sup>242</sup> Matthew 6:21 ESV.

<sup>243</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ti v.

Flacius contends that the faithful should vocally express a willingness to trade earthly goods for religious freedom. He writes, “We should also employ human plans and means, and not discard them, and in that way test our Lord God.” He explains some of these human means in what follows: “You poor and entirely downtrodden churches”—in other words, the remnant—“petition your worldly lords diplomatically...begging them to remain satisfied with temporal rule and governance and leave the spiritual to Christ.”<sup>244</sup>

Flacius did not expect the rulers to be satisfied with mere pleas and begging, however. After an attempt to shame the temporal lords by a comparison to the liberality of the Turks in their treatment of Christians, and before a warning that it is not fitting for a Christian lord to treat the Jews better than fellow Christians, Flacius continues his counsel to the faithful few: “Promise them even more than you owe them by right, if only they will permit you the gospel free and unadulterated. Give the tyrants your goods (if it is what they want to have), so long as you retain the treasure of eternal life, so that in all of these great difficulties and burdens you might maintain your grasp on the grace of God, his comfort, and the hope of eternal life.”<sup>245</sup> In this way, he asserts, “you poor churches of Christ can diligently and sincerely beseech your earthly authorities for the sake of Christ, whose name is common to them and us.”<sup>246</sup>

#### IV. Conclusion

Already poor, pitiable, downtrodden, and tiny, the faithful few could plead only Christ with an appeal to Christian charity and a promise to become even poorer, trading all their goods

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<sup>244</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fii r.

<sup>245</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fii v.

<sup>246</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fiii r.

if necessary, in order to retain heavenly doctrine and the promise of the life to come. There was no other God-pleasing recourse left them, certainly not human scheming. If there were to be resistance, that was the office and responsibility of their rulers, to whom Flacius would certainly appeal for the same throughout the Adiaphoristic Controversy. The Church, however, was to be content with its pitiable existence so long as it could maintain its hold on Christ and His Word.

## Confession, Martyrdom, and the Church Militant

### I. Courageous Christianity

It was time for Christ's Church, reinvigorated through Luther's doctrine, to man up. Now was the time to buck up and bear the cross. Flacius challenges his fellow Lutherans: "It is your duty, if you are a Christian at all, yes, if you are a man. You are no different than others."<sup>247</sup>

While simple and of lowly stature in the eyes of the world, the Christian should be no less manly than those of earthly might. Speaking about the removal of faithful pastors, Flacius fumes,

"When weak-kneed, godless, and unlearned ninnies are set in the place of pious, faithful, learned, and steadfast preachers, as happened in Torgau, then already the entire papacy has been accepted."<sup>248</sup> Powerful enemies necessitate courageous resolve: "We should see to it that we

manfully withstand the devil when he attacks us in his gruesome manner and endeavors to lead us to abandon God."<sup>249</sup> Flacius exhorts that Christians are to struggle with their eyes on the prize:

"We must stay alert and struggle manfully against the devil and we will be blessed."<sup>250</sup> And

while their foes might have impressive weaponry and power, the Christian has potent arms as well: "We should arm ourselves with God's Word not only so that we can guard ourselves with

it, but also so that we can strengthen our brothers and struggle manfully against those who counsel unfaithfulness, and those who do not walk correctly according to the teaching of the

gospel in full sight, and those (as Paul says) whose mouths must be stopped."<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Giii v.

<sup>248</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Civ v-Di r.

<sup>249</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Di r.

<sup>250</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hiv v.

<sup>251</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Ui r.

## II. The Promise and Benefits of the Cross

For Flacius the cross is not merely part of the Christian life, a temporary inconvenience; the cross defines the Christian life—Christ’s cross and the individual Christian’s. In a certain sense Flacius’ *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit* is nothing other than an extended commentary upon and development of Luther’s theology of the cross. Flacius reminds his fellow Lutherans that “we must be obedient to God, since he subjects the Church to the cross, and through much sorrow and distress wants to conform it to his Son, so that afterward he may give it a place with him in glory.”<sup>252</sup> The cross, then, is not only a burden to be borne; it is salutary. It has a remedial purpose. It reminds the Christian that his whole life is a cycle of repentance—contrition and trust in Christ for forgiveness, from which flows a desire to sin no more.<sup>253</sup> The Christian should thus be thankful for the cross. It prepares him for glory—lasting glory. Flacius expounds, “God wants the Church to be conformed to the likeness of his Son and suffer with him, so that he may be praised and the heavenly Father honored both in the confession of his teaching and the expectation of his help, as many passages in the Holy Scriptures attest.”<sup>254</sup> The choice is easy when faced with theological compromise or suffering: “We should be willing, glad, and prepared to take up the cross upon our shoulders so we may follow the Lord and enter through the narrow door to eternal life.”<sup>255</sup> This was the path of all true Christians, for “all those who are blessed by God in Christ Jesus must be formed as one through the cross and thus enter into eternal life, as all of Holy Scripture abundantly indicates.”<sup>256</sup> Moreover, the cross is instructive: “This miserable

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<sup>252</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Bi 4.

<sup>253</sup> Flacius, *Breves Svmmae Religionis Iesu Christi*, A3 v.

<sup>254</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Eiv r.

<sup>255</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fiv v.

<sup>256</sup> Henetus, “Ein kurzer Bericht vom Interim,” 110.

deplorable time has indeed written a fitting and somewhat large commentary about the Bible. For the daily experience of the cross makes everything in the Bible clearer and more meaningful.”<sup>257</sup>

He summarizes this teaching about the place and role of the cross:

In sum, the Holy Spirit regards and speaks about the cross much differently than our old Adam. Christ says in Matthew 5, “Blessed are those (yes, not poor and miserable) when people insult, abuse, and speak all manner of evil against you for my sake,” so long as they are not lying. Be happy and comforted (and not sorrowful and despairing), you will be rewarded well in heaven. St. Paul also esteems the cross highly when he writes to the Philippians, “You are not only called to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his sake.” St. Paul tells us that it is a great gift from God to suffer for the sake of Christ. And the damned world doesn’t begrudge us such gifts, although the old Adam does not desire them at all. Yet we will see in the last day whether the old Adam has been wiser and more truthful or the Holy Spirit.<sup>258</sup>

### III. A Time for Confession

Christ’s stirring words to his disciples are echoed again and again throughout Flacius’ writings as a stern reminder for those tempted to buckle under the cross: “Whoever confesses me before men I will confess before my Father,” and likewise, “Whoever denies me before men I will deny before my heavenly Father.”<sup>259</sup> Similarly, Flacius urges his readers to fear much more than men “the one who can cast body and soul into hellish fire however and whenever he wills.”<sup>260</sup> The only escaping the cross at the present time was apostasy, and the reward of apostasy was, as it always had been, hell. There is thus no greater danger in Flacius’ mind than that Christians “forsake the true gifts of God and his Word, deny him in that way, and lose all faith in our Savior when he says, ‘What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet lose

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<sup>257</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Eii v.

<sup>258</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Eiv v-Fi r.

<sup>259</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Tiv v; Matthew 10:32-33.

<sup>260</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Bi v; Matthew 10:28.



his own soul?”<sup>261</sup> It was a simple equation for the frightened Christian: “For it is undoubtedly true that whoever wants to save his life will here lose it in this life also through the just judgment of God. Whoever loses something for the sake of God, however, will be rewarded a hundredfold in this life also by our Lord God.”<sup>262</sup> Everything was filtered through the cross, then. All were lost without Christ’s cross and believers were lost if they shirked their own, for they were laid upon them by a loving God to conform them to Christ’s image. “If, however, our Lord God ordains that they should martyr and strangle us, then we would flee such misfortune in vain, and in so doing would deny him,” Flacius argues.<sup>263</sup> What spoiled brats the Lutherans would be, Flacius was convinced, if after God in his mercy brought Luther’s bright light of the pure gospel to shine among them, they should refuse to withstand or risk anything in exchange. No, they of all men, for this very reason, had a responsibility to stand firm and fight for the truth. Flacius maintains:

It is truly a great and inexpressible kindness of God that the almighty God in these last times, in such darkness, has rekindled the light of his dear holy gospel and invited all men in such a friendly fashion into eternal life. It is therefore an entirely unspeakable sin, yes, plainly a sin against the Holy Spirit, that we are so lax that we let the Word of God, and likewise the eternal life that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has won for us with his own precious blood, be taken away from us with our full knowledge and will.<sup>264</sup>

#### IV. A Time for Martyrs

Flacius considered the present a time for martyrs, perhaps especially so. He writes, “Up until now we have briefly said that one should persevere in the truth and the pure, godly doctrine

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<sup>261</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Cii v.

<sup>262</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Eiii v.

<sup>263</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hi v.

<sup>264</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Giv r-Giv v.

and confess the same also with his mouth before men. Now, however, since the cross continually follows the confession, and the same is the reason that many go astray from Christ, we want to say a little about crosses.”<sup>265</sup> The cross is thus tied to a right and pure confession of the truth, which the devil and the world cannot countenance. “The cross is always and especially now near the confession of the Word of God,” he observes.<sup>266</sup> Such is the nature of the Christian life, and so while the danger might have increased as of late, the nature of the struggle never changes. It is part and parcel of the Christian faith. Faith has consequences, often unpleasant, in this life: “The God-fearing will have peace, not in this life, but in the next life.”<sup>267</sup> Flacius laments, however, how few were prepared to meet such a fate, should God require it. He writes, “Now, however, in this time of martyrdom one sees almost no Christian anywhere who is willing to follow after Christ with the cross.”<sup>268</sup> Sadly, “Maybe only one or two or a very small group might yet follow, but from afar.”<sup>269</sup> There were martyrs on both sides, however. Even those who sought to escape the cross faced a martyrdom of sorts. Flacius writes, “This is a confusion of the entire religion, a terrible martyrdom of the conscience, dishonor of the name of Christ, and results in innumerable souls entering into eternal damnation.”<sup>270</sup> If one is going to die, better to die to this world than to God and one’s own conscience. At least in Christian martyrdom, death for Christ, Christians have a reliable and glorious pattern established for them: “We should in these things consider and imitate the example of the holy prophets, our dear Lord Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the

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<sup>265</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Div v.

<sup>266</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Giv r.

<sup>267</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Div v-Ei r.

<sup>268</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Eiii r.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>270</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Hiv r.

holy martyrs, who in previous times even gave up their lives for the Word of God.”<sup>271</sup>

### V. The Church Militant

In Flacius’ teaching the church this side of Christ’s return is and remains *ecclesia militans*, the church militant. Like Christ, it will have its holy week, or weeks. Like Jesus, Flacius seeks to demonstrate that the church of his day is undergoing a holy week at the hands of those who claimed to be religious scholars and priests.<sup>272</sup> Flacius spells this out clearly for his readers: “Just as at the time of Christ no one opposed the true teaching more than the high priests and scribes, and after them the other Jews, so in our time the Turks do not condemn and persecute the teaching of God’s Word like the pope and priests...and the accomplices of the pope who still yet praise the name of Christ.”<sup>273</sup> Jesus had promised his followers as much: “If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you.”<sup>274</sup> And so, Illyricus writes, “It goes for the poor Christian in this martyr week as it went for Christ before his death.”<sup>275</sup> The fact that the true Church is a church militant reassured the Christian in the present crisis that he was not alone. Even more, what he was experiencing was not unique, and things had in fact sometimes even been worse, and yet God had not forsaken his people: “The situation has at times been worse for the Church than it is now, and our dear Lord Jesus Christ has surely enlightened the Church with the brilliance of his grace and given it joy.”<sup>276</sup> It is a privilege to suffer for the sake of the truth,

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<sup>271</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Di r.

<sup>272</sup> Waremundus, “Eine gemeine Protestation,” 143.

<sup>273</sup> Henetus, “Ein kurzer Bericht vom Interim,” 112.

<sup>274</sup> John 15:20 ESV.

<sup>275</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hi r.

<sup>276</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hiv r.

endure the loving discipline of the heavenly Father, and become part of such a noble fellowship of prophets, apostles, and martyrs, as Christians sing in the *Te Deum*. These were those, after all, who had chosen to lose their head in order to gain their crown, who rightly esteemed what Christ had done and won for them, what he had bestowed upon them through pure love and grace alone. Flacius reminds Lutherans that they possess no less the same sweet promises of Christ that inspired and motivated such steadfast obedience in earlier times of church history. The question, Flacius maintains, is whether they still believed those promises now that their faith was put to the test. Flacius challenges, “If we Christians now still believe the words of Christ, then let us accordingly hold fast to the opinion that it is better that we endure war and every misfortune, yes, even be plunged into the Elbe by the Spanish.”<sup>277</sup>

In *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici* Flacius devotes several pages to reasons why the Christian should bear up under the cross and stand firm for Christ even unto death.<sup>278</sup> He gives ten chief reasons. First, God had protected Martin Luther and other great teachers of the church most wonderfully even though all the world ranted against them and made serious threats. Second, the Holy Spirit promises that, while God’s rod may fall upon his people, in the end it is his enemies who pay the ultimate price. Third, while Daniel and Revelation prophesy that the Antichrist will lash out against the Church, Christ’s coming will bring his warfare to a futile end. Fourth, God promises to hear prayer through his Son, Jesus. Fifth, the obstinacy of the enemies testifies to their final doom that awaits them, for “pride goes before destruction.”<sup>279</sup> Sixth, in all history, no one who has persecuted the gospel has escaped unscathed. The seventh and eighth

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<sup>277</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Hi v.

<sup>278</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Ciii v-Dii v.

<sup>279</sup> Proverbs 16:18 ESV.

deal with recent prophecies and signs, which were mentioned in the portion of this thesis that treated Flacius' apocalyptic sense. Ninth, God had already preserved his faithful in the war up to this point, so that, although many foes had risen against them, Magdeburg had stood firm and tall, unvanquished. Tenth and finally, Luther's heirs had so far survived three years of persecution already, the *Augsburg Interim*, the Council of Trent, the adiaphora of the the Adiaphorists, and all terrors, so that the enemies had been confounded and exposed through their own cruelty and plotting.

### VI. The Problem of Suffering

Flacius points out that Christians are not unique in that they suffer. Even unbelievers face adversity and endure sorrow. In this life, suffering eludes no one, no matter how hard someone might try to escape it. It is simply part of life in a fallen world. Flacius writes, "Although the Christians are especially and more than others called to the cross in this life, yet the godless, that is, those who have not been called to the Word of God, suffer as well, and no less than the Christians."<sup>280</sup> Flacius then goes on to provide a number of examples of contemporaries who were suffering with no connection to the Christian faith. He explains, "I do not say this to rejoice at their misfortune. Rather, I would like to make clear to us gentle, yielding people that others also who have not been persecuted for God's Word nevertheless suffer just as much as we do."<sup>281</sup> Suffering is a given, in other words. The Christian is simply fortunate enough to know that God uses such suffering to provide, not merely hardship, but a cross, which serves a remedial, salutary, instructive purpose. To forsake the cross is not to escape suffering. It will

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<sup>280</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Aiii v.

<sup>281</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Aiv r.

likely simply come in some other form. Rather, to forsake the cross is to lose the benefits of suffering, to suffer, in essence, to no end and for no good purpose. With this in mind, Flacius counsels, “Since we accomplish nothing through our sad, doubting, godless concern, but rather only make the suffering worse, and add a new special suffering onto the suffering of the day, let us therefore be patient and humble ourselves under the powerful hand of God, who has laid this cross of persecution upon us.”<sup>282</sup> Escaping God’s rod is unwise, if not impossible, Flacius counsels. There is nothing preventing God, should the Christian despise the rod, from bringing the hammer to “smash us entirely to pieces.”<sup>283</sup>

## VII. Conclusion

Flacius was convinced that the cross was a simple fact of the Christian life, and a blessed one at that. God loved his children, and because he loved them, he sometimes allowed them to suffer, to bear the cross, in order to train them in righteousness, refocus them upon Christ, and prepare them for the glory of heaven. So also, some Christians were called to martyrdom, to confess their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ even unto death. This was a special privilege. This was something that all Christians could be called to face. And martyrdom too served a salutary purpose. It testified to the truth of God’s Word, gave honor to God, and served as a witness to others. There was no way around this. Christians were called to confession no matter the cost. Christ’s words were clear. And so any attempt to flee the cross or avoid suffering for the sake of Christ was a denial of Christ who had suffered for the Christian. In such tribulation, the Christian was either a confessor or apostate, a martyr or a hypocrite. There was too much at stake to let

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<sup>282</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Aiv v.

<sup>283</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Hiv r.

fallen human wisdom and reason take the lead in times of crisis. God's Word alone must be the guide, because the old Adam, the sinful nature, would never willingly suffer even a minor inconvenience for the faith, because it was opposed to faith and in enmity toward God. Trust in God and prayer were the Christian's weapons and refuge. This was Flacius' theology of the cross, which framed and guided his response to the Interim crisis.

## **Turks, Mamluks, Jews, and Spaniards**

### I. An Outsider on Outsiders

An interesting aspect of Flacius' writings that deserves attention is his use of outsiders in his arguments, especially in order to shame his opponents. This is especially interesting, at least in the case of the Spaniards, because Flacius himself was an outsider, a non-German, as was not infrequently pointed out by his opponents. His German was clearly non-native, together with his mannerisms and palate. As mentioned earlier, one of the reasons the Illyrian was at first hesitant to move to Magdeburg after leaving Wittenberg was that he "would have to eat smoked bacon and meat, and also salted and dried fish."<sup>284</sup> His foreignness was conspicuous and exploited by his adversaries in the Adiaphoristic Controversy, and yet that did not stop the Croat himself, like his opponents, from exploiting the outsider status of others to his own advantage in the heat of theological contest. For instance, he was quite capable and adept at using the Spanish in order to trump up German disdain toward foreign influence in their lands. We will now examine a number of instances in which Flacius employs outsiders to bolster his case, beginning with Turks and Muslims, or Mohammedans, as he called them.

### II. Turks

In a number of instances, Flacius argues that the Lutherans would be treated more fairly under the Turks than they were being treated under their fellow Christians. For instance, he notes that the gospel "is also taught in Turkey and Greece and the Turks consent to it being preached in their territory and yet our tyrants are so insane, ranting and raving, that they do not permit it or

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<sup>284</sup> Kaufmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 183.



want it.”<sup>285</sup> In another place, when urging his fellow believers to plead with their rulers for freedom to practice their religion, he advises, “Indicate to them also that even the Turks are content with tribute and allow Christians to preach Christ. How much more rightly, then, should those who want to be called Christians, and indeed praise themselves for being such, permit the same and imitate the Turks, open and avowed enemies of God?”<sup>286</sup> Similarly, he adds that the rulers should be ashamed for it to become known that “they would persecute their own Christian brothers and the true gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and want to cause them more trouble than the Turks, the Tartars, and other Mohammedans.”<sup>287</sup> Elsewhere, when reassuring the persecuted that their oppressors would not escape unpunished, he promises that this will especially be true for the current persecutors because, after the gospel had been enkindled again among them in these last days for more than thirty years, they had nonetheless attacked this good news of Jesus Christ “more than the Turks and heathen.”<sup>288</sup> He scolds the magistrates and papists, on the one hand, for failing to fulfill their offices, and on the other hand, for overstepping them. He promises not to yield no matter how much they threaten, challenging, “Rage and bluster against us according to your pleasure and satiate yourself with the blood of the Christians, for which you have until now so fervidly thirsted and endeavored to pour out a hundred times more than the Turks!”<sup>289</sup> He cautions, “Consider again, you blinded, hardened hearts—for even unbelievers’ tiny infants will be cast into eternal death for their original sin when they die, unless planted through baptism into the Christian Church—how will it fare with

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<sup>285</sup> Henetus, “Ein kurzer Bericht vom Interim,” 112.

<sup>286</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fii r.

<sup>287</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fiii r.

<sup>288</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Civ v-Di r.

<sup>289</sup> Waremundus, “Eine gemeine Protestation,” 164.

you, all you open sinners, who outdo the bandits, all tyrants, and even the Turks in blasphemy and bloodthirsty gruesomeness?”<sup>290</sup> The rulers also make the gospel and Christ a laughingstock among outsiders like the Turks. Flacius argues that through the Lutherans’ inappropriate accommodations to the emperor and the pope “Jews, Turks, papists, and all the godless laugh at and scorn us, our gospel, and Christ, and God’s name is blasphemed on account of our shameful inconstancy.”<sup>291</sup> In addition, the current changes proposed by the emperor and the Adiaphorists present no less danger than if the Turks were attempting to foist Mohammedan adiaphora upon them and merit equal opposition.<sup>292</sup>

### III. The Koran

In addition to his use of the Turks, Flacius also makes use of the Koran. By comparing the *Augsburg Interim*, the *Leipzig Interim*, and papal teaching to the Koran, he derides it as new revelation, about which Jesus warned his Christians to be on guard. Complaining about the brazen willingness to compromise the truth among the religious and political rulers of his day, Flacius sneers, “Almost any knight can now write a new interim or Koran and set up his own golden calves for worship with the appearance that the honor of the gospel of Christ will be maintained in that way, just as Aaron said that in the morning they would hold a festival of the Lord, yes, and not of the calf.”<sup>293</sup> Taking a jab at what had happened in Torgau, where Georg Mohr replaced Gabriel Zwilling as pastor after Zwilling preached against the new liturgical changes and prayed for the deposed Elector John Frederick, Flacius quips, “For Mohr and other

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<sup>290</sup> Waremundus, “Eine gemeine Protestation,” 165-166.

<sup>291</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Cii v.

<sup>292</sup> Flacius, *Quod Hoc Tempore*, A6 r.

<sup>293</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Aiii v.

Adiaphorists, and the additional dunderheads of Meissen, when one presents them with the prospect of some great benefit or promises them some great good, will in the end accept the entire papacy, indeed the Koran itself.”<sup>294</sup> Similarly, returning to the earlier epicurean theme, Flacius denounces the spirit of the times with these words: “We would rather sit quietly by, look on, and let someone each day prescribe and devise a new Interim and Koran for us. Oh, what real and true epicurean sows we are and not attentive listeners to the Lord!”<sup>295</sup> Here the allusions to the Koran obviously serve to shame his opponents by comparing their twisting of the revealed truth to the revelations of Mohammed, the great enemy of the Christian faith seen as a malevolent and enterprising inventor of a new and diabolical faith.

#### IV. Mamluks

Continuing the theme, Flacius also labels his enemies Mamluks. Mamluk warriors were Christians, frequently prisoners of war or slaves, who converted to Islam and then were enlisted in military service by the Ottomans, thus gaining their conquerors’ respect and a higher position within that society. They were renowned for their ability in battle, especially in the Crusades, as well as in more recent Turkish incursions, which were still fresh in the memory of Flacius and his contemporaries. Calling someone a Mamluk, therefore, was a timely way of besmirching him as turncoat, especially in the minds of Christians once again threatened by Turkish military incursions. Not only had Mamluks converted to another faith, but they subsequently waged warfare against Christianity, and in Flacius’ thinking, this was precisely what the Adiaphorists were doing. Urging his readers not to follow the example of the Wittenbergers, Flacius counsels,

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<sup>294</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Civ v-Di r.

<sup>295</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fiv r- Fiv v.

“Let the Mamluks go their way, fear men more than God, and pay more attention to transitory than eternal things. Let us all the more instruct and strengthen ourselves and others who are fleeing eternal damnation and want to inherit the eternal life (Ephesians 6).”<sup>296</sup> Elsewhere he writes, “Above all, however, we should (would we otherwise be Christians?) condemn godless wisdom, or rather the foolishness of our defecting Mamluks.” He continues, urging true Lutherans to let the pretenders go their way and “ape the Antichrist and his band, first in religious things, and thereafter also in the persecution of Christians, in which they show themselves to be the Antichrist’s obedient children to the full.”<sup>297</sup>

Flacius sees Adiaphorists as persecutors, not in the sense that they themselves take up arms, but because they empower others to do so. It was only because they had gone along with Moritz’ desire for compromise in liturgical matters that it was possible for the traitorous elector now to attempt to enforce those changes with force. If he and other rulers did not have the reputation and consent of the Wittenberg faculty and other similar esteemed theologians behind them, they might well never have dared to act in such a way. The Adiaphorists were therefore enablers, and so Flacius writes, “First, our persecutors, the Mamluks, cry out that they also have the true religion and we can certainly have peace and the true Christian religion at the same time, if we ourselves only wished to have it. This devil’s lie is easy to lay aside.”<sup>298</sup> And further, “Additionally, many of them have not only approved the Interim, but also our persecution. They are therefore for the sake of peace not only Mamluks but also persecutors of Christ.”<sup>299</sup> The only explanation Flacius can fathom is that they had lost their senses and their previous convictions

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<sup>296</sup> Flacius, *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit*, Civ v.

<sup>297</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Bi v.

<sup>298</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Bii r.

<sup>299</sup> Flacius, *Vermanung Matth. Flacii Illyrici*, Bii v-Biii r.

for fear. They, and not he and the Magdeburgers, had changed their attitude and stance. Flacius notes, “I certainly do not doubt that, if they returned to their senses and thought back, should someone earlier have laid before them such adiaphora—even Luther himself—they would have screamed, “O pope, this Mamluk will impose the entire papacy on us, wrapped up under some deceptive words.”<sup>300</sup>

### V. Jews

Not only Muslims were useful fodder for the Flacius’ argumentation; he also utilized the Jews in order to shame the rulers and expose the feebleness of the Adiaphorists’ Christianity. Just as he warned that Lutherans should not make the faith and Christ a laughingstock among the Turks, so also he warned that they should not make it the same among the papists and Jews. He counsels, “We should persevere in matters of the faith, as in other things, so that when the Jews and papists must mock us, they are in truth rejecting, blaspheming, and casting aspersions upon our gospel and our Christ himself.”<sup>301</sup> Nor should Christians in their sophistry and duplicity become like “Jews and Balaams,” Flacius urges, “for we sadly see, may God lament it, that some Jews and Balaams, so wily and unashamed, receive everything laid before them by the godless Ahithophels and dare to drag it into the church.”<sup>302</sup> In addition, Christians should avoid Jewish ceremonies, by which Flacius means ceremonies established as a new law—the traditions of men Jesus warned about in the gospels. He writes, “Many nowadays are becoming bored with the simplicity of the gospel, marvel over the pomp and ostentatious appearance of the Jewish,

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<sup>300</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Aii v.

<sup>301</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Cii v.

<sup>302</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Eii v.

heathenish ceremonies of the pope, and praise the external discipline and order of our opponents just as foolishly as one would praise excrement.”<sup>303</sup>

Flacius also argues that the Jews within the empire were treated better than the faithful Lutherans. He urges his fellow Lutherans, “Show [your magistrates] that it would indeed be very bad and unjust for those who want to be called Christians to be patient with the Jews—openly godless people and slanderers of God—and permit them to have sufficient treasure, while they at the same time do not permit us to retain the plain truth of Jesus Christ.”<sup>304</sup> If those who reject Christ were left in peace in the empire, so much more ought those who confess and preach him rightly be protected and afforded the freedom to practice their religion in peace, Illyricus maintains.

The Jews are not always objects of derogatory statements or negative examples, though. In several instances Flacius contends that Christians should learn from the Jews. While their religion was backwards and impious, at least they were committed to it, he reasons. He writes, “The Jews...busy themselves with this the most, that they may keep their religion whole and pure, even though it is false, godless, and entirely damning, and they are willing to suffer and trade all for it, even their greatest treasures, before they would let it be changed.”<sup>305</sup> The steadfastness of the Jews in their convictions is placed in sharp contrast to the yielding attitude and approach rampant among the evangelicals. He continues, “We, however, most unfortunately, want to hand over the holy, saving gospel and the known truth even though we are not in much danger at all.”<sup>306</sup> Elsewhere he recounts a story to illustrate just how foolish the vacillating

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<sup>303</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Hi r.

<sup>304</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fii v.

<sup>305</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Hi v; Fiv r.

<sup>306</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Fiii r.

evangelicals compliant and elastic spirit appeared to outsiders. He recalls:

A year ago, in the Christmas season, when an assembly [*Landtag*] was held in the marketplace about the new Interim at Leipzig, certain Jews (as one says) asked certain Christian merchants why they held so many assemblies about their religion, whether they perhaps had doubts about it. They were Jews, a godless people according to the Christian opinion, yet they rather would have died a thousand deaths than have the religion that they followed changed. We thus carry ourselves so subtly with our adiaphora, new Interim, and so many days that Jews, Turks, papists, and all the godless laugh at and scorn us, our gospel, and Christ, and God's name is blasphemed on account of our shameful inconstancy.<sup>307</sup>

Once again, as with the Turks and the Mamluks, Flacius employs a group of perceived outsiders or foreigners in order to demonstrate the shamefulness of rulers' harsh treatment of the faithful and the shamelessness of the Adiaphorists' lack of resolve.

#### VI. Spaniards

Finally, Flacius also exploits German patriotism and hostility toward foreign occupiers by connecting the Spanish with the *Augsburg Interim*. He doesn't hesitate to call the *Augsburg Interim* a "Spanish Interim," for instance. He writes, "But the present peculiar and Spanish Interims, which secretly are patched together by a few in a little hut, are full of dubious and long-winded speech" and "are forcefully foisted upon the church."<sup>308</sup> This is Spanish infringement upon the German Reformation's will and rights, and the Adiaphorists, because they were willing to collaborate with the Spanish, are *de facto* bad Germans. They are willing to serve an outside power for security and advancement. This is no doubt a backhanded jab at the emperor as well, who preferred to reside in Spain instead of within Germany. Flacius asks:

Our Adiaphorists, on account of a little danger, dare us to make room for "mere" adiaphora in such weighty matters, which they earlier objected to with great cries.

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<sup>307</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Cii v.

<sup>308</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, Miv r.

What do you suppose they would do if the Spanish set hangmen, chains, and fire before them on one side and great prelates and gracious lords on the other, who promised them bishoprics, positions as provosts, canonries, good benefices, etc., where they could craft yet more adiaphora?<sup>309</sup>

No Spanish threats or fear of Spaniards should move the heirs of Luther's German Reformation. They should be willing to suffer all before they would give into the Spanish brutality serving at the behest of emperor and pope. As mentioned above, the evangelicals should choose death, even drowning in the Elbe by Spanish hands, over causing "so many Christians to stumble, yes, even so many churches, change our religion and teaching into that of the papacy."<sup>310</sup>

## VII. Conclusion

In all of the examples provided above, we see that Flacius found it useful to make use of outsiders and foreigners in order to bolster his arguments. This is surprising especially because Flacius himself was an outsider and a foreigner, who openly admitted his lack of proficiency in German, and whose enemies had used his foreign origins against him. Nevertheless, he chose to expose the faults of his opponents through the lens of outside opinion and in comparison with the treatment received by Christians in non-Christian lands and the treatment of outsiders within Christian lands over against that received by the Lutherans unwilling to accept the *Augsburg Interim* or *Leipzig Interim*.

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<sup>309</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Giv v.

<sup>310</sup> Flacius, *Ein Christliche vermanung*, Hi v.



## The Magdeburg Confession, Magdeburg's Fight, and the Formula of Concord

### I. The Magdeburg Confession

Flacius did not write the *Magdeburg Confession*, which has been called the “birth certificate of the Gnesio-Lutheran movement,” but the author or authors (most likely Nicholas Gallus and/or Nicholas Amsdorf, Luther’s longtime friend) certainly knew his work and shared his convictions in this regard.<sup>311</sup> Kaufmann states that Flacius was almost certainly involved in its formation, whether indirectly or directly, and has called him the heart and motor of Magdeburg, the Lord God’s Chancery.<sup>312</sup> In support of this judgment is the astounding fact that Flacius accounted for roughly forty percent of the publications in the city during the years of the Adiaphoristic Controversy.<sup>313</sup> Flacius did not sign the *Confession* because he was not a pastor (Flacius probably never preached in German in his entire life). Regardless, the *Confession* uses the same imagery as Flacius, the same Scriptures, largely the same argumentation, and labels its opponents similarly (Adiaphorists, Interimists, Ahithophels, etc.).

Before addressing the content of the *Magdeburg Confession*, it is imperative to understand the political background in the city, where there had been enduring power struggles since the very first intrusions of the Reformation. This, it must be remembered, was as much a political document as a theological one, perhaps even more so, written as a confession of the pastors of Magdeburg, but at the behest and with the permission of the city council, its chief task the legitimatization both of the council’s actions thus far and any future possible resistance. While clear apocalyptic themes run throughout the writings of the Magdeburg theologians, as

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<sup>311</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation*, 176.

<sup>312</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation*, 177, 74.

<sup>313</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation*, 73.

Thomas Kaufmann has quite correctly noted and elaborated upon, the city council clearly had very temporal ambitions involved in the resistance they offered the emperor and later Moritz. There had been a long struggle for increased spiritual and temporal autonomy from the archbishop, evident in vocal bitterness toward the Roman Catholic clergy still active there, especially the cathedral canons. After the adoption of the Reformation in 1524, only the cathedral chapter in the city, the collegiate church, a few other churches and monasteries had remained Roman Catholic, with frequent confrontations, beginning with the abolition of the Roman Catholic Mass, also in 1524. Both political and religious strains evidenced themselves, for instance, in the seizure by the city of many of the choice properties of the cathedral chapter and the Roman Church, the confiscation of the Augustinian monastery, which in time became a municipal library, the threatened arrest of the cathedral chapter's clergy, which led most of the canons to flee, and the occupation of the lands of the archbishopric, for which defensive excuses were offered.<sup>314</sup>

In the survey that follows, emphasis will be placed upon the Latin version of the *Confession* with noteworthy text in the German bracketed. The *Confession* begins with three Bible passages on its cover page and they are significant: Psalm 119:46 (incorrectly cited as Psalm 18 in the Latin, but correctly in the German), which is Nathan's call for David to repent; Romans 13:3; and Acts 9:4,5.<sup>315</sup> The most significant is Romans 13:3 because the confessors do not follow Luther's translation, but employ their own with a crucial departure from Luther's.

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<sup>314</sup> Kaufmann, *Das Ende der Reformation*, 26-38, See also Rein, *The Chancery of God*, 58-60, 130ff.

<sup>315</sup> *Bekentnis Unterricht und vermanung der Pfarrhern und Prediger der Christlichen Kirchen zu Magdeburgk* (Magdeburg: Michel Lotther, 1550). *Confessio et Apologia Pastorum & reliquorum ministrorum Ecclesiae Magdeburgensis*. (Magdeburg: Michael Lottherum, 1550). The *Confession*'s translation of Psalm 119:46 reads: "I will speak about your testimonies before kings and not be put to shame." Romans 13:3 is rendered, "Rulers are not for terror for good conduct, but for bad." Acts 9:4,5 is translated, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard to kick against the goads."

Luther translated Romans 13:3 as follows: “*Denn die Gewaltigen sind nicht den guten Werken, sondern den bösen zu fürchten. Willst du dich aber nicht fürchten vor der Obrigkeit, so tue Gutes, so wirst du Lob von derselbigen haben.*”<sup>316</sup> The German edition of the *Magdeburg Confession* translates it thus: “*Die Gewaltigen sind von Gott nicht den guten wercken, sondern den bösen zufürchten verordnet.*” The confessors add three words, *verorden* and *von Gott*, which help explain their use of the passage to support their argument. “First, they are the good, and second, by terrorizing them, the ruler has forsaken his God-given mandate to rule.”<sup>317</sup> This is a fundamental point of their argument and foundational for the lesser-magistrate doctrine they will establish in the *Confession*, that when the superior magistrate has forsaken his proper mandate from God to rule, the lesser magistrate may and indeed must intervene in just defense of his realm and subjects. The final passage, Acts 9:4,5, is Jesus’ question to Paul before the saint’s conversion, asking Saul why he was persecuting not merely the church, but Christ himself. The confessors, like Flacius, and also like Luther in his *Warning*, return to this thought numerous times, that the emperor and the pope persecute not only Christians, but indeed the Christ whom they claimed to follow. For instance, they later write that their enemies desire by their actions “with Satanic fury to persecute Christ in his members and pollute their hands with the blood of Christ and trample him underfoot.”<sup>318</sup> They plead, “We appeal to you, Emperor Charles, most merciful lord, that you would in no way allow the papal cohort to exercise your majesty and power in order to drive away Christ and in the end crucify him again,” and warn that Christ was not faring well under the emperor’s rule, which in the end could not fare well for Charles.<sup>319</sup> For

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<sup>316</sup> Luther Bibel, 1545.

<sup>317</sup> Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 68.

<sup>318</sup> *Confessio*, H4 r.

<sup>319</sup> *Confessio*, E4 v.

that reason, they urge him to change course, “so that he may repay your faithfulness in these gifts with his greater gifts in eternal life.”<sup>320</sup> They add that even if the emperor does not regard them as fellow Christians, he nevertheless affords Jews and Turks religious liberty within his realm. Why would he, then, not afford the Lutherans the same, whose confession shares so much in common with his own? “You allow certain Jews and heathens to remain in their religion and do not compel them to accept yours with arms.”<sup>321</sup>

The *Confession*, like Flacius’ *Ein buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*, is divided into three main parts.<sup>322</sup> It progresses in similar fashion to Luther’s *Warning*—“a survey of the present situation and the theological issues at stake, an apology for just resistance, and a warning.”<sup>323</sup> In the opening of the work, the confessors stated the crux of the crisis:

When the higher magistrate persecutes his subjects’ rights by force, whether natural or divine rights, or the true religion and worship of God, then the inferior magistrate ought to resist according to the command of God.

The current persecution we now suffer from our superior authorities in particular pertains to the oppression of the truth of our religion, the true worship of God, etc. [and the reestablishment of the lies of the pope and his abominable idolatry].

Therefore, our magistrate [and every Christian authority] ought to resist this oppression according to the command of God.<sup>324</sup>

The first section of the *Confession* is for the most part a restatement of the *Augsburg Confession*, intended to demonstrate that the Magdeburgers were not doctrinal innovators. This part of the work is not as important for our purposes as the next two. The second part of the *Confession* is the most pertinent, setting forth the rationale for resistance. This is also, therefore, the section

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.

<sup>321</sup> *Confessio*, F1 r; *Bekennnis*, Ji r.

<sup>322</sup> Flacius, *Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen*.

<sup>323</sup> Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 78.

<sup>324</sup> *Confessio*, A1 v; *Bekennnis* Ai v.

most crucial to the city council's quest for legitimation. While theological arguments and citations run throughout, it often reads like a juristic work. Robert von Friedeburg details the legal arguments set forth in the *Confession* and their significance for later thought, as well as the ways in which the *Confession* marks a break from or evolution of earlier Lutheran argumentation.<sup>325</sup> Among a number of other things he notes three key developments in the *Magdeburg Confession* worth mention here. First, it establishes the right, and indeed the obligation, of the Magdeburg Council as a ruling authority to act in defense of its subjects, locating this authority in Romans 13. This was an important expansion of divine authority, as Lutherans had previously argued that the emperor, and sometimes the princes, were the authorities established by God with others in leadership positions, individually or as a body, holding their authority through them, but not from God himself. Second, the *Confession* recognizes the defense of the fatherland and its freedom from tyranny as a responsibility of all citizens within their vocations. Third, it portrays the struggle of the people of Israel as instructive for all the faithful in their struggle against the Antichrist.<sup>326</sup>

As to the basis of the conflict, the Magdeburg confessors leave little doubt: it “pertains to [the gospel,] the glory of God and the eternal salvation of all men.” They insist that the city's citizens long to be faithful, obedient, peace-loving subjects.<sup>327</sup> They act only for the defense of God's true Word and religion.<sup>328</sup> They might be pathetic and despised by their superior foes—the remnant of Christ—but they must act according to their conscience and within their rights,

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<sup>325</sup> Schorn-Schütte, ed., *Das Interim*, 389-437.

<sup>326</sup> Friedeburg, “Magdeburger Argumentationen zum Recht,” 429.

<sup>327</sup> *Confessio*, E3 v; *Bekentnis*, Hiii r-Hiii v.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*

for their own good, and the good of the church everywhere, “especially foreign ones.”<sup>329</sup> In short, they frame the city’s resistance as a defense of religious liberty and true Christianity within a nominally Christian empire. The lesser magistrate doctrine is founded, therefore, not simply upon natural, German, and imperial law, but most especially upon the Christian obligations of those magistrates toward Christ and for the sake of their subjects, as seen in this blunt admonition to the Emperor Charles V himself:

These dual obediences [to God and to the emperor] serve and animate each other [in a Christian manner] without harm or disturbance to conscience on either side when both are constituted between the limits prescribed by God and the laws of offices [so that each is given what belongs to it]. When, however, one is deficient, horrible sins and grievous tumult [and outrage] necessarily result, just as you now, Emperor Charles, have exceeded the limits of your rule [and office] and extended it into the realm [and office] of Christ. You are the cause of this turmoil [with us and some others before us], as Elijah told Ahab [and we must just as freely inform you], and not those who do not want to give you the honor that belongs to God nor are able to do so for fear of the wrath of God and eternal punishments.<sup>330</sup>

Magdeburg’s resistance might be justified with arguments from natural and civil law, but its cause, they argue, is the emperor’s intrusion into the realm and rule of God’s law.

The third part is a warning to fellow evangelicals hesitant to rally to Magdeburg’s cause or tempted to provide aid of any sort to the emperor and his allies. To do so, as Flacius repeats in his writings, would be nothing but abandonment of the faith and persecutions of Christ. An extended quotation from this portion of the *Confessio* should suffice to demonstrate the general tone and argument:

And as their willful ignorance does not excuse them in the least, they thus are [and remain] persecutors of Christ, and [therefore those who know better and to a certain extent confess, even though they pretend that they do not do what they do gladly, but have to do it, all the same do it and become knowing persecutors of Christ]. For that reason, they are not excused any more because they have been

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<sup>329</sup> *Confessio*, A3.

<sup>330</sup> *Confessio*, F1 v-F2 r; *Bekennntnis*, Jii v-Jiii r.

compelled by others contrary to their will. Indeed, for that reason they are more worthily counted persecutors of the gospel than the ignorant [and will receive greater recompense]. You may now certainly produce many who have up until now professed with us the gospel of Christ [and God's Word], who, if anyone today were to threaten them with punishments or death, with the loss of honors or riches, would, if they were able to bring Christ bodily back [from heaven] indeed would be prepared to destroy him again, some for the sake of the pleasures of this life, [favor], advantages, and honors, others having been overtaken by the circumstances, [out of fear for loss of their life and goods]; if only they should see his lowly state and him forsaken by God in his weakness, they would altogether [willingly and knowingly] crucify Christ again in his own person according to the will of the tyrant. How is that now any different from what is now happening among us? Christ himself testifies concerning this, "Whatever you have done to one of the least of these you have done to me" (Matthew 25). And to Saul he says, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me" (Acts 9).<sup>331</sup>

Nothing less than Jesus' gospel and eternal salvation hang in the balance. And the *Confession* intends to set forth everything in such a way as to leave all without excuse. There is no wiggle room, in other words, especially not such an expanse of it as the Interimists claimed. This is a time of confession, and in a time of confession nothing at all is adiaphora, let alone everything in every way.

The siege ultimately ended with a treaty. Moritz continued his duplicitous ways and, when it became clear that a stalemate was inevitable, switched sides "to solidify his rule."<sup>332</sup> Both the city and Moritz declared victory. The Peace of Augsburg was established four years later, in 1555, which "recognized the central claim of the Magdeburg pastors and the *Torgau Articles*—religious diversity does not equal imperial disloyalty."<sup>333</sup> Whether or not Moritz or Magdeburg were the real victor, Magdeburg ultimately solidified its iconic place in the story of the defense of Lutheranism and the preservation of Luther's doctrine.

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<sup>331</sup> *Confessio*, H3v; *Bekentnis*, Nii v-Niii r.

<sup>332</sup> Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 89.

<sup>333</sup> Whitford, *Tyranny and Resistance*, 90.

## II. The Formula of Concord

The Flacian principle, *nihil est adiaphoron in statu confessionis et scandali*, that is, nothing is an adiaphoron in a state of confession and offense, is the position adopted by the *Formula of Concord* in 1577. The *Formula*, signed by roughly two-thirds of the Lutheran pastors in Germany, concludes that it had been wrong to compromise in a time of confession. Without saying as much, the *Formula de facto* concedes that the Magdeburgers had been right in their actions and convictions. It resolves, “We reject and condemn as false the opinion of those who hold that in a time of persecution people may comply and compromise with the enemies of the holy gospel in indifferent things, since this imperils the truth.”<sup>334</sup> Moreover, “Likewise, we regard it as a sin worthy of punishment when, in a time of persecution, actions contrary and opposed to the confession of the Christian faith are undertaken because of the enemies of the gospel, either in indifferent things or in public teaching or in anything else which pertains to religion.”<sup>335</sup> The general arguments of Flacius’ *Book on True and False Adiaphora* are approvingly restated. Flacius and the Magdeburgers are vindicated regarding adiaphora and confession. Their approach is accepted by the *Formula* as the Lutheran approach, the one consistent with the teaching of Martin Luther. In addition, one of the chief authors of the *Formula of Concord*, Martin Chemnitz, outlines an approach to ceremonies in his *Examination of the Council of Trent* that was not unlike Flacius’ own.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.28, 640.

<sup>335</sup> Ibid.

<sup>336</sup> Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. Fred Kramer, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 2:109.



In approaching the *Formula's* answer to the challenges and questions raised by this tumultuous time in Lutheran history, it would perhaps be best to first look at the Scripture on which Article X stands. This will afford a helpful comparison with the arguments of Flacius and the Scriptures he employed in the controversy that preceded and necessitated this article of the *Formula of Concord*. Following are some of the passages quoted by the *Formula* with brief comments when beneficial.

The *Formula* operates on the theological assumption that the Roman Catholic Church had not changed its stripes from the days preceding Luther's passing to glory. It was still a church wrapped in a semi-Pelagian system prone to the inducement of either self-righteousness or despair in those subject to it. The *Formula* asserts that Jesus' words regarding the religious leaders of the Jews were equally true of the pope's followers: "They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."<sup>337</sup> In permitting Rome to invade Wittenberg under the guise of indifferent rites and rubrics, therefore, the Adiaphorists betrayed the cause of the very man buried beneath the pulpit from which some of them preached on the Lord's Day.<sup>338</sup> The lay person's eyes, which Luther had labored so tirelessly by the grace of God to pry from an unbroken fixation upon works, relics, novenas, processions, and penances, were now, whether by the intention of the Adiaphorists or not, once again directed to the ceremonies and superstitions that had once before filled and transfixed them. For that reason, Christ's warning once again needed to be sounded during the controversy, which is what Flacius did. Ceremonies, even when

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<sup>337</sup> Matthew 15:19 ESV; KW, *Epitome* X.3, 515.

<sup>338</sup> E.A. Wilh. Krauss, *Lebensbilder aus der Geschichte der christlichen Kirche fuer Lutherische Leser Nordamerikas ausgewaehlt und bearbeitet* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1911), 479

instituted for good order and with fine intentions, are nevertheless, “in and of themselves no divine worship, nor even a part of it.”<sup>339</sup>

Like Flacius, the *Formula* draws upon St. Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians and his letters to the Romans and Galatians. The focus upon 1 Corinthians is understandable. As noted earlier in this thesis, was any congregation in the New Testament any more embroiled in an adiaphoristic controversy of its own than the one at Corinth? Paul therefore provided a felicitous principle for the congregation there which is echoed and stated more succinctly in Romans 14:13: “Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother.”<sup>340</sup> The Epitome grounds part of its response to the Adiaphoristic Controversy directly in Paul’s call for care in regard to the weak in faith: “Of course, all frivolity and offense must be avoided, and special consideration must be given particularly to those who are weak in faith.”<sup>341</sup> Galatians 5:1 also clearly applied. There Paul wrote, “For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.”<sup>342</sup> Precisely when rites and practices, excepting of course the Sacraments, which are by nature mandates, are commanded as though they were necessary to please our God or merit salvation, those rites and practices, according to the *Formula*, become an affront to the gospel, robbing the Christian of the freedom that Christ has won for him at such an inestimable price.<sup>343</sup> Continuing with Galatians, like Flacius, the *Formula* cites Paul’s rebuke of Peter.<sup>344</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> KW, *Epitome* X.3, 515.

<sup>340</sup> Romans 14:13 ESV.

<sup>341</sup> KW, *Epitome* X.5, 515.

<sup>342</sup> Galatians 5:1 ESV.

<sup>343</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.10-12, 637.

<sup>344</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.13-14, 637-638.

Resonating Flacius' insistence that the Christian could not reconcile Christ with Belial, the *Formula* alludes to St. Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 6:14, "Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?"<sup>345</sup> Indeed, where there was no commonality in teaching (*lex credendi*), there should be no impression of commonality in teaching presented through the worship practice of a congregation or church body (*lex orandi*). The *Formula* teaches that church rites must be rejected under the following circumstances:

We should not regard as free and indifferent, but rather as things forbidden by God that are to be avoided, the kind of things presented under the name and appearance of external, indifferent things that are nevertheless fundamentally opposed to God's Word (even if they are painted another color). Moreover, we must not include among the truly free adiaphora or indifferent matters ceremonies that give the appearance or (in order to avoid persecution) are designed to give the impression that our religion does not differ greatly from the papist religion or that their religion were not completely contrary to ours. Nor are such ceremonies matters of indifference when they are intended to create the illusion (or are demanded or accepted with that intention), as if such action brought the two contradictory religions into agreement and made them one body or as if a return to the papacy and a deviation from the pure teaching of the gospel and from the true religion had taken place or could gradually result from these actions.<sup>346</sup>

Why?

Thus, submission and compromise in external things where Christian agreement in doctrine has not already been achieved strengthens idolaters in their idolatry. On the other hand, this grieves and offends faithful believers and weakens their faith. Christians are bound to avoid both for the welfare and salvation of their souls, as it is written, "Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks" [Matt. 18:7], and, "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea" [Matt. 18:6].<sup>347</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> 2 Corinthians 6:14 ESV; KW, *Solid Declaration* X.6, 636; KW, *Solid Declaration* X.23, 639.

<sup>346</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.5, 636.

<sup>347</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.16, 638.

If this were not a clear enough echo of Flacius' own arguments and use of Scripture, the *Formula* then quotes one of the passages Flacius utilized most frequently in his propaganda against the Leipzig Interim: "Special attention should be given to Christ's words, 'Everyone therefore who confesses me before others, I also will confess before my Father in heaven...'" (Matt. 10:[32])."<sup>348</sup> David Scaer aptly summarizes Article X's answer to the challenges and questions raised at this tumultuous time in Lutheran history as follows:

The answer given by Article X was the one adopted by Flacius, who refused to tolerate the reintroduction of Roman Catholic customs. Christians have freedom to practice or to avoid customs and rituals which are neither forbidden nor commanded in God's Word, but they are duty bound to resist where compliance in customs would give the impression that they were complying with false doctrine. Should a human ordinance be given the stature of a divine command or be viewed as necessary for salvation, it must be resisted.<sup>349</sup>

The *Formula of Concord* does not merely side with Flacius' teaching regarding adiaphora. By adopting Flacius' approach, the *Formula* in essence declares it Lutheran, the position consistent with Luther's teaching. The *Formula* consciously grounds its conclusions in earlier confessional documents, such as the *Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope* and the *Smalcald Articles*.<sup>350</sup> It also cites several of Luther's letters. The fact that Flacius had first published these referenced letters during the Adiaphoristic Controversy only reinforces this impression that the *Formula* accepts Flacius' stance as Luther's own.<sup>351</sup> And it is not surprising, then, that the *Formula's* doctrine of adiaphora largely reads like Luther's own regarding the place and criteria for the acceptance and rejection of ceremonies—it was Luther's teaching, after

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<sup>348</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.17, 638.

<sup>349</sup> David Scaer, *Getting Into the Story of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), 91.

<sup>350</sup> Kurt Marquart, "Article X. Confession and Ceremonies," in *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*, ed. Robert D. Preus (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978), 265.

<sup>351</sup> KW, *Solid Declaration* X.24, 640. See footnote 316.

all, that Flacius endeavored to preserve and uphold throughout his theological contest with the Adiaphorists. Luther's words, echoed by Flacius, found further reiteration in the *Formula*:

Other matters will adjust themselves as the need arises. And this is the sum of the matter: Let everything be done so that the Word may have free course instead of the prattling and rattling that has been the rule up to now. We can spare everything except the Word. Again, we profit by nothing as much as by the Word. For the whole Scripture shows that the Word should have free course among Christians. And in Luke 10[:42], Christ himself says, "One thing is needful," i.e., that Mary sit at the feet of Christ and hear his word daily. This is the best part to choose and it shall not be taken away forever. It is an eternal Word. Everything else must pass away, no matter how much care and trouble it may give Martha. God help us achieve this. Amen.<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> LW 53:14.

## Conclusion

In order to fill a lacuna in the historiography of the Reformation after Luther's death, this thesis has explored the writings of one of its most vocal and important figures, Matthias Flacius Illyricus, produced during one of its most defining crises, the Adiaphoristic Controversy. In preparation, I've examined, first, Luther's theology of the two kingdoms and his teaching regarding resistance to secular authorities in religious matters, and second, the religious and political background which made this controversy possible. Attention has also been paid to Flacius' formative years, both in Croatia and Venice, as well as in Germany, as a student of Luther and Melancthon. This background enables the reader to better understand the Adiaphoristic Controversy as well as those who contended on both sides during it, how Flacius' worldview was shaped, and what it entailed.

Flacius saw himself as a Lutheran through and through. His uncle, Baldo Lupetino, was martyred as a Lutheran in the Venetian Inquisition. He himself left behind family, friends, and his future in the south to venture north to Wittenberg and study the theology of the German Reformation. Sacrifice for the faith of the Scriptures marked his life and defined his understanding of the Christian Church. While in Wittenberg, in the throes of depression and spiritual angst, Luther himself counseled the young Illyrian and shared with him his own experiences with *Anfechtung*. Luther thus became more than an instructor; Luther became a spiritual father. Flacius' Christianity was therefore Lutheran not only in theological confession but also in existential orientation. Even more, he saw the theological and liturgical battles in which he competed through the lens of the religious controversies of Luther's life. It was the same devil attacking the same Scriptures, the same Antichrist undermining the saving work of the same Christ, who alone mediates between God and man, not through man-made ceremonies

or rites, but through the Word and the sacraments alone. What was at stake in Flacius' view was nothing less than the entirety of the Reformation, because for Flacius, as for Luther, doctrine consisted not of disparate parts, but formed a *corpus doctrinae*, “a whole that functions as God's instrument of accomplishing his will.”<sup>353</sup> The wavering of the Adiaphorists endangered nothing less than the central doctrine of Christianity, the teaching upon which the Church stands or falls, justification by grace through faith alone—popes, priests, superstition and human tradition parading as true worship of God necessarily therefore excluded.

The works researched for this thesis were chosen because they present, not only contrasts, but positive statements of Flacius' convictions. They state why resistance was necessary and what was at stake. They argue why Christians had to support faithful pastors and reject those who compromised. They draw confessional lines and delineate between true adiaphora and false. They establish the ultimate authority in the church: the Bible and Luther's teaching, especially as encapsulated in the Augsburg Confession and, because of its applicability to the current crisis, his *Warning to His Dear German People*. These pamphlets also warn against a respect for persons that would detract from this authority and denounce the overstepping of authority exercised by secular rulers, bishops, and the papacy. These writings define what Lutheranism is and should act and look like after the death of the great reformer, Flacius' theological instructor, pedagogical mentor, and spiritual father.

Flacius' teaching concerning adiaphora was grounded in the epistles of St. Paul, especially Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Galatians, but he preferred examples from the Old Testament to illustrate his points. He did make use of accounts from the New Testament, but they were frequently tied to applications already set forth by the biblical authors themselves and

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<sup>353</sup> Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice*, 18.

therefore less creative in nature. The Old Testament also provided more fitting and numerous examples of resistance toward those holding political powers, particularly when they infringed upon religious devotion and faithfulness. For this reason, Flacius also made use of the Apocrypha, whose accounts of the times of the Maccabees, for instance, proved remarkably valuable. An exception might seem to be his regular employment of scenes from St. John's Apocalypse, the Book of Revelation, but this is not so. In Revelation, Flacius found imagery and prophecy, not historical precedent. For precedent he turned primarily to the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and also to ecclesiastical history. Throughout Flacius demonstrates his deep familiarity with the Scriptures and the impressive facility in the Old Testament he possessed as a Hebrew professor. He also makes plain his knowledge of church history, which would be displayed in grander detail in his organization of the *Magdeburg Centuries* and his *Catalogue of Witnesses of the Truth*, a collection of historical testimonies against the Roman papacy and its theological and ecclesiastical claims.

Flacius saw not merely his church, but the Church, Christ's Church, under siege, as often before, but perhaps as never before. Church leaders and magistrates were conspiring together to undo what God himself had graciously wrought in recent decades. The light of the Word, no longer obscured under the bushel of papal pestilence, shone brighter than it had since apostolic times. The Babylonian captivity was ended, but now threatened to return and bring Luther's work to naught. The danger was serious and had to be confronted. The Church had been given only two tools through which God promised to deliver to his people the benefits of Christ's cross. There were only two means through which God promised his Spirit would create and preserve faith, the beggarly hand which received the salvation Christ won for them. The Church had the Word and the sacraments, preaching and the administration of the visible, efficacious



signs and seals of God's promises. The liturgical changes the magistrates were seeking to enforce threatened both. They censored preaching and shrouded the sacraments in superstition and false teaching. The Church was thus handcuffed and the Spirit's means of grace impeded.

In order to help the reader understand Flacius' arguments and appeals to Scripture, this thesis has identified and explicated key themes and imagery in his writings, especially from the Bible. His apocalypticism is evident throughout. He feared that the Adiaphoristic Controversy could spell the end of the Reformation, and even more, of the world. Christ's return appeared imminent, the prophecies of Revelation fulfilled in the papal Antichrist's war against Christianity, recently revitalized and renewed through the preaching and teaching of Martin Luther, the third Elijah. No enemy harbored greater enmity and contempt toward God than the Antichrist of Rome, not even the Egyptians and the heathen.<sup>354</sup> He was the man of lawlessness from 2 Thessalonians. In fact, Flacius ended his *Breves Symmae Religionis Iesus Christi, & Antichristi* with 2 Thessalonians 2, together with Daniel 11.<sup>355</sup> This was not a new battle in church history but a culmination of the ancient and original battle between God and Lucifer, Christ and the serpent.

The Church was battered and bruised. Confessionally Lutheran churches and individuals were dwindling in numbers. Like Christ in Holy Week, Lutheranism was having its martyr week, its time of suffering and trial. But this was to be expected. The Holy Christian Church had been a remnant throughout most of its history, if not all. It was small, unlearned, and foolish in the eyes of the world, whose epicurean and temporally obsessed mindset could conceive of it in no other way. And as often had been the case in its history, a serious threat came, not only from outside

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<sup>354</sup> Flacius, *Breves Symmae Religionis Iesu Christi*, A6 r.

<sup>355</sup> Flacius, *Breves Symmae Religionis Iesu Christi*, A6 v-A8 r.

the ranks of professing Christians, but within. As Judas had betrayed Christ and his little flock of twelve, so also now the Adiaphorists were betraying their brothers and sisters in the Lutheran Church and Jesus himself in the person of his Christians.

Flacius reminded his coreligionists that suffering in the Christian life was not a sign of God's displeasure, but of his love. God had often tested his Church. God had often let it bear crosses, and these crosses were never in vain. They were salutary and instructive. Bitter trial and strife here would only make the glory and peace of heaven sweeter and all the more appreciated. In fact, crosses, Christ's and the Christian's own, were such a predominant part of the Christian life and Christian teaching that they were definitive of true Christianity. A lack of crosses often indicated a lack of faithfulness to the truth. Right confession had historically garnered stiff opposition, and so it must be in Flacius' day. It was a fear of such crosses that had driven his former colleagues in Wittenberg into consortium with the Antichrist. It was the prospect of such crosses that led some princes to waver in their opposition, in stark contrast to the courageous stand taken by Magdeburg, Flacius' adopted home during the Adiaphoristic Controversy, which benefitted greatly from its welcoming of this gifted Illyrian publicist and his swift and steady stream of publications defending the confessional and political stance taken by the city's pastor and council.

Finally, even as an outsider himself, Flacius was able to exploit outsiders in order to stiffen the spine and stoke German and Lutheran pride among his audience. He charged that the Christian rulers of the empire and various German lands were more cruel toward orthodox Lutherans than the Turks were toward Christians in their lands. He contended that the Adiaphorists had written a new Koran with the *Leipzig Interim*, while the papacy had for centuries been writing new Korans. Lutherans who compromised with Moritz, Charles V, and

the Roman pontiff were depicted as Mamluks. As the Mamluks had forsaken Christianity and adopted Islam for political and economic gain, so the Adiaphorists had done the same. And as the Mamluks had persecuted Christianity by warring against it with Muslim armies, so also the Adiaphorists and those who failed to oppose them not only apostatized but actively strove against the Christianity of the Bible and Luther, its faithful expositor. The *Augsburg Interim* may have been foisted upon them by a German emperor and the *Leipzig Interim* by a Lutheran prince, but Flacius connected their enforcement to Spanish power. Spanish troops were foreign occupiers undermining the integrity of German sovereignty, papal foot soldiers conjuring in Protestant minds thoughts of the cruelty of the Spanish Inquisition. And there would be no end to the papists' and magistrates' confusing of the two kingdoms and their power grabs unless faithful Christians—German Christians—put their foot down and stood firm. Flacius insisted that only a fool could not see that. The trend was clear: “First they claimed that they only wanted to punish a few disobedient princes and in no way sought to contest with our freedom and fatherland...but now, after they have with a great cry and sense of urgency extended their reach to the end of German land, one must reconsider what they have attempted here.”<sup>356</sup>

In the end, Flacius' pamphlets are nothing more than a call to faithfulness to the truth as he knew and understood it through Luther's instruction and writings. He processed the crisis through the lens of his own self-identity and worldview, shaped by past experience with persecution, theological consolation in the midst of uncertainty, and instruction at the feet of the two great Wittenberg pillars of the Reformation, Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon. It was a sad and unplanned twist that led Illyricus into conflict with the latter, which no doubt shook him to his core, challenging friendships, past experience, and the trajectory of his academic career. It

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<sup>356</sup> Henetus, “Ein kurzer Bericht vom Interim,” 99.

is hard to conceive how Flacius possibly gained more than he lost through his bold stance against the *Leipzig Interim*. He gained fame, but not without even greater notoriety. He later landed a position at the University of Jena, but this was a step down from the more illustrious University of Wittenberg, where he taught before his flight to Magdeburg, and no such professorial prospect seemed likely, let alone imminent, when he took his bold stand in the heat of the Adiaphoristic Controversy. He published widely, but with little or no personal profit. He lost friends, made enemies who would yearn and work for his downfall long after the Adiaphoristic Controversy, was isolated from family, and began a lifetime of wandering. He had argued that Israel's exodus was the pattern of the Church's history and present, and it certainly became the pattern of his own life. As his writings warn, though, the faithful Christian could hardly protest such a lot. Christ had warned his little flock of a life of crosses and persecution. In each age the Christ's Church would have its foes, its Christ and Belial, and the church militant would never be without struggle, even in times of temporal peace, or the "peace of the belly," as Flacius was wont to call it. The task of this life for the believer was not the attainment of comfort and ease but the preservation of God's Word and Luther's teaching. Nothing testified and abounded more to God's glory, after all, than unwavering steadfastness and commitment to the unadulterated confession of Christ's work and person, through which alone the Christian finds justification and an eternal life more precious than anything this world and its powers could offer or provide. Sadly, Flacius died an isolated, wandering man in Frankfurt am Main in 1575. Even more sadly, as a result of his confession and his controversial nature, he was denied a Christian burial.<sup>357</sup> The cross marked even his death, as he likely long expected it would.

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<sup>357</sup> Oliver Olson, "Matthias Flacius (1520-1575)," in *The Reformation Theologians: An Introduction to the Early Modern Period*, ed. Carter Lindberg (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 88.

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- \_\_\_\_\_. *Entschuldigung Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, geschrieben an die Universitet zu Wittemberg der Mittelding halben. Item sein brief an Philip. Melanthonem sampt etlichen andern schrifften dieselbige sach belangend. Verdeudscht.* Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1549.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Epistola S. Hulrici episcopi Augustani, circiter ante sexcentos et 50 annos, ad Pontificem Nicolaum primum, pro fefensone coniugii Sacerdotum, scripta, ex qua apparet, quam impudenter Papistae S. Patres jactent, cum et vita et doctrina cum S. Patribus plane ex Diametra pungent.* Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1549.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Ein geistlicher trost dieser betrübten Magdeburigschen Kerchen Christi, das sie diese Verfolgung umb Gottes worts, und keiner andern ursach halben, leidet.* Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1551.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Qvod hoc tempore nulla penitus mutation in religion sit in gratiam impiorum facienda. Contra quoddam scriptum incerti autoris [Melancthon] in quo suadetur mutation piarum*

*caeremoniarum in Papisticas per Hemannum Primatem*. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1549.

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\_\_\_\_\_. *Der Theologen bedencken, odder (wie es durch die ihren inn öffentlichem Drück genennet wirdt) Beschluss des Landtages zu Leiptzig, so im December des 48. Jars, von wegen des Auspurgischen [sic] Interims gehalten ist. Welchs bedencken odder beschluss wir, so da widder geschrieben, das Leiptzigsche Interim gennet haben. Mit einer Vorrede und Scholien, was und warumb jedes stück bisher fur unchristlich darin gestraffet ist*. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit, in bekentnis der warheit, Creutz, und Gebett, in dieser betrübten zeit sehr nützlich und tröstlich*. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1549.

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### Appendix: Matthias Flacius Illyricus' Adiaphoristic Controversy Publications

No Date	Appears In:
<i>Ein sehr schöne histori von der standhafftigkeit, in Bekentnis und leiden, des heiligen manns Simeonis, welcher ein oberster Superintendent gewesen ist in Persia, und von seinem gesellen, aus dem andern buch Sozomenis.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	
<i>Des Interims und Interimisten warhafftige abgemalte figure und gestat daraus yderman sonderlich bey dem Bretspiel, und der grossen Kannen mit Bier, yhr andacht und messig leben erkennen kan.</i> Broadsheet.	
<i>Der unschuldigen Adiaphoristen Chorrock, darüber sich die unruhige und Störrische Stoici mit ihnen zancken.</i> Broadsheet.	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 248
<i>Unterscheid zwischen der waren Religion Christi, und falschen Abgöttischen lehr des Antichrists, in den fürnembsten stücken.</i> Broadsheet.	
<i>Wie iemmerlich und schendlich der Babst sapt seinen Bischoven und geistlichen, die arme Scheflein Christi durch die Officialen schindet. Durch den Hochgelarten und grossen praelaten Petrum Blesensem, welcher für jaren gelebt hat.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	
<b>1547</b>	Appears In:
<i>Eine Prophetische Buspredigt für die jenigen, So den erkanten und bekanten Christum mit dem Antichrist und seinem hauffen verfolget haben, oder noch verfolgen.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<b>1548</b>	Appears In:
<i>Bedencken Doctoris Martini Lutheri Auff dem Reichstag zu Augspurgk im XXX. yare gestellt. Item ein ander Bedencken auff den tag zu Schmalkalden den Ersten Martii, des 40. yars. Der Theologen So zu solcher zeit daselbst gewesen, welcher namen zu rücke verzeichnet. Zu diesen ferlichen zeiten nützlich und von nöten zu lesen. Damit yederman bericht werde, Was in Religionssachen nachzugeben oder nicht könne nachgegeben warden.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<i>Bericht vom Interim der Theologen zu Meissen versamlet. Anno M.D. xlvij.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]	Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 45
<i>Cantio de Papa Romanaque Ecclesia, per Boemum quondam ante annos circiter 100 composita, secundum ordinem alphabeti. n. p.</i>	
<i>Carmina vestusta ante trecentos annos scripta, quae deplorant inscitiam Evangelii, et taxant abusus ceremoniarum, ac quae ostendunt doctrinam huius temporis non esse novam. fulsit enim semper et fulgebit in aliquibus vera Ecclesiae doctrina.</i> Wittenberg: Georg Rau.	
<i>Ein gemine protestation und Klagschrifft aller frommen Christen wieder das Interim allen Gotfu(e)rchtigen gewissen tro(e)stlich zu lesen. Durch Joannem waremundum.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 240-245; 498; Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 259
<i>Ein gemeine protestation und Klagschrifft aller frommen Christen wieder das Interim und grausame verfolgung der wiedersacher des Evangelij. Durch Joannem Waremundum.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 498; Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 135-182
<i>Ein kurtzer bericht vom Interim. Durch Theodorum. Henetum allen frommen Christen.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 498; <i>The Chancery of God</i> , 114; Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 93-113; Rein, "Faith and Empire", 72
<i>Das man in diesen geschwinden leufften, dem Teuffel und Antichrist zugefallen, nichts in den Kirchen Gottes vorendern soll. Durch Johannem Hermannum.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<i>Fragestücke unde Artikel, Auff welche die Pristerschafft im Stiff Meintz zufforderung des Teufflischen Pabsthumbs itzo Examiniert warden.</i> [Magdeburg]	

<b>1549</b>	Appears In:
<i>Apologia Matthiae Flacij Illyrici ad Scholam Vitebergensem in Adiaphorum causa. Eiusdem Epistola ad Philip. Melantho.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter] (see <i>Entschuldigung Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, geschrieben an die Universitet zu Wittemberg...</i> )	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 506
<i>Antwort der Predicanten in Hessen auff die schriffte des Bischoffs von Meintz oder Rabsackesbrieff De abrogatione matrimonii der Prediger und von der Dispensation mit dem Babst zu halten vom brauch des Sacraments sub utraque specie, welche ihnen von Fürstlichen Rethen zu Cassel für gelesen, den fünfften tag Augusti diss XLIX Jars.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	
<i>Bulla Antichristi de retrahendo populo Dei in ferream Aegyptiacae servitutis fornacem, Maguntini Rabsaces blasphemis literis consona. Ex qua facile animadverti potest, quid Satan per untranque suam virtutem, scilicet, per patricidiale bellum contra Ecclesiam Dei susceptum, &amp; per mendacia concilium, Interim, Adiaphora &amp; Chorrock efficere conetur.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<i>Clarissimae quaedam not(a)e ver(a)e ac fals(a)e religiones nostram doctrinam esse veram, Papistarum vero falsam &amp; Antichristi.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 506
<i>Confutation Catechismi laruati Sydonis Episcopi</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 507
<i>De vocabulo fidei et aliis quibusdam vocabulis, explication vera et utilis, sumta ex fontibus Ebraicis. Cum praefatione Phil. Mel.</i> Wittenberg: Veit Kreutzer.	Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 82
<i>Entschuldigung Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, geschrieben an die Universitet zu Wittemberg der Mittelding halben. Item sein brief an Philip. Melanthonem sampt etlichen andern schriffte dieselbige sach belangend. Verdeuscht.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger] (see <i>Apologia Matthiae Flacij Illyrici ad Scholam Vitebergensem...</i> )	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 277, 279; Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 81, 84; Rein, "Faith and Empire, 72; Kaufmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 180
<i>Eine Entschuldigung Matthiae Flacij Illyrici, an einen Pfarher. Item desselben, was da sey die Kirchen verlassen odder nicht verlassen. It. zween Trewme Philippi.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]	Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 17
<i>Epistola de Morte Pauli III Pontificis Maximi deque iis quae ei post mortem eius acciderunt. Piacenza</i> [Basel: Oporinus]	
<i>Epistola Luciferi ad Spirituales circiter ante annos centum: ut ex codices vetustate apparet, descripta, Auctore Nicola Oren.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 340-367
<i>Epistola S. Hulrici episcopi Augustani, circiter ante sexcentos et 50 annos, ad Pontificem Nicolaum primum, pro fefensione coniugii Sacerdotum, scripta, ex qua apparet, quam impudenter Papistae S. Patres jactent, cum et vita et doctrina cum S. Patribus plane ex Diametra pungent.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.	
<i>Eine Erschreckliche Historia von einem, den die feinde des Evangelii inn welsch Land gezwungen haben, den erkanten Christum zuvorleugnen</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<i>Etliche Brieffe, des Ehrwürdigen herrn D. Martini Luthers seliger gedechtnis, an die Theologos auf den Reichstag zu Auspurg geschrieben, Anno M.D.XXX. Von der vereinigung Chirsti [sic] und Belials. Auss welchen man viel nützlicher lehr in gegenwertiger gefahr der Kirchen nemen kann, Verdeuscht. Item, etliche andere Shriefften [sic] nützlich und tröstlich zu lesen. Item zwo schriffte der Theologen zu Wittenberg, Eine an die Prediger zu Nürnberg, Die ander an den Churfürsten zu Sachsen, auch von voreinigung Christi und Belial, Anno XL. Geschieben. Item eine schriffte der Prediger von Hamburg an die Theologen zu Wittemberg. Item sonst etliche brief D. M. L.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 18

<i>Etliche greiffliche gewisse und scheinbarliche warzeichen, Daraus ein jeder wie geringes verstands er sey, Woe r nur zu erforschung der warheit geneiget ist, vormercken kan, das die Lehre der Evangelischen des Herrn Christi Lerer [sic] selbst ist, und das der Papisten Lehr falsch, Gotloss und vom Antichrist erfunden ist. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Ein gemeine protestation und Klagschrifft aller frommen Christen wieder das Interim allen Gottfu(e)rchtigen gewissen tro(e)stlich zu lesen. Durch Joannem Waremundum. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 507
<i>Form und Weiss einer Bisschofflichen, ja Ertzbischofflichen Visitation am Rein, in welcher zu besehen ist, wie es kunfftig umb die Kirche wird gelegen sein, wenn die Bischoff ihre alte Jurisdiction wider bekommen warden. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 319-340
<i>Evangelij, allen Gotfürchtigen gewissen, zu dieser betrubten zeit, überaus sehr nützlich und tröstlich zu lesen. Durch Joannem waremundum. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	
<i>Hertzogs Moritzen zu Sachsen, und des Marggrafen zu Brandenburg, bey der Churfürsten vereinigung, des Interims halben. n. p.</i>	
<i>Liber de veris et falsis adiaphoris, in quo integer propemodum Adiaphorica controversia explicatur. Magdeburg. (see Ein Buch von waren und falschen Mitteldingen)</i>	Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 81, 88
<i>Qvod hoc tempore nulla penitus mutation in religion sit in gratiam impiorum facienda. Contra quoddam scriptum incerti autoris [Melanchthon] in quo suadetur mutation piarum caeremoniarum in Papisticas per Hemannum Primatem. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 81, 89; Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 18
<i>Ein rechter lesteriger Rabsakes brief, geschrieben von einem Bischoff an einen Christlichen Fürsten, in welchem er ihn vermanet das er sol von der erkanten warheit Christi zu dem Antichrist abfallen, Daraus man sehr woll kan mercken wie gut es die Antichristische Wolff emit den armen Schefflein Christi meinen. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	
<i>Responsio ad epistolam Philippi Melanthonis. Magdeburg: [Michael Lotter]</i>	Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 81
<i>Eine schöne Historia von der standhaftigkeit des heiligen mans Basilij, beschrieben in der Tripartita Historia, und ander schöne Exampel mehr itz zu dieser zeit sehr tröstlich und nützlich zu lesen. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Ein Schrifft des Achtbarn und Ehrwirdigen Herren seliger gedechtnis, Doctoris Martini Lutheri, wider den Eisleben, Kurtz vor seinem end geschrieben, vormals aber nie im Druck aussgangen. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	
<i>Eine schrifft wider ein recht Heidnisch ja Epicurisch Buch der Adiaphoristen, darin das Leiptzische Interim verteidiget wird, sich zu hüten für den jtzigigen Verfelschern der waren Religion, sehr nützlich zu Lesen. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 272
<i>Ein Sendbrieff, P. Aesquillii von dem tode Pauli des dritten Babsts dieses namen. Item Was ihm nach seinem tode begegnet ist. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	
<i>Ein vermanung zur bestendigkeit, in bekentnis der warheit, Creutz, und Gebett, in dieser betrubten zeit sehr nützlich und tröstlich. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.</i>	
<i>Von der Messe und ihrem Canone Magistri Johannis Agricolae Eyssleben, Lhere und schrifft, Welche er auff dem Reychstag zu Speyer in der Epistel zu den Colossern geprediget, und folgend Anno. M.D. XXVII. zu Wittenbergk im Druck offentlich hat ausgehen lassen, Dem Interim so er ytz hat helffen stellen gantz entegegen Daraus sein geyst zuvermercken. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	
<i>Von der Papisten Tauff, und andern Caeremonien oder Kirchendiensten. ob</i>	

<i>die nach erkanter und angenomener Wahrheit, duch jemand Christlich zu besuchen und zu gebrauchen sein. Durch einen Prediger in Oberdeutschland gestellt. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Eine Vorrede Philippi Melanthon, auff das fürgelegte Buch zu Regensburg. Deusch ausgangen zu Wittenberg, Darin er unterrichtet, Was man von aller Reformation und vergleichungen, so in der Religion mit den Papisten fürgenomen wird, halten sol, Not und nützlich zu lesen. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger</i>	
<i>Wider den ausszug des Leipsischen Interims, oder das kleine Interim. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 237-239
<i>Wider das Interim, Papistische Mess, Canonem, und Meister Eissleuben, durch Christianum lauterwar, zu dieser zeit nützlich zu lesen. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	Dingel, <i>Reaktionen auf das Augsburger Interim</i> , 745-773
<i>Wider den Schnöden Teuffel, der sich jtz abermals in einen Engel des liechtes verkleidet hat, das ist wider das neue Interim, Durch Carolum Azariam Gotsburgensem [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 238-239; Rein, <i>The Chancery of God</i> , 204
<i>Ein wunderlich gesicht newlich bey Braunschweig am hiemel gesehen, beschriben durch den hochgelerten hern Doctorem Nicolaum Medlerum superattendentem zu Braunschweig [Magdeburg: Pankraz Kempf]</i>	
<b>1550</b>	Appears In:
<i>Amica humilis et devota admonitio ad gentem sanctam, regalque Antichristi sacerdotium de corrigendo sacrosancto canone Missae [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter] (see Eine freuntliche, demütige und andechtige errinerung an das heilige Volck...)</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 521
<i>Antwort M. Nicolai Galli und M Fla. Illyrici auf den brief etlicher Prediger in Meissen, von der frage, Ob sie lieber weichen den denn Chorrock anzihen sollen. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 248
<i>Aristotelous hapanta. Aristotelis opera quaecunque. hactenus extiterunt omnia quae quidem ut antea integris aliquot libris supra priores aeditiones omnes a nobis aucta prodierunt. Basel: Johann Bebel und Michael Isengrin.</i>	
<i>Der Ausszug des beschlusses oder der vorleuffer des Leipsischen Interims, Aus einem gedruckten Exemplar gedruckt. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Breves Summae Religionis Iesu Christi, &amp; Antichristi. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 250-257
<i>Ein buch, von waren und falschen Mitteldingen, Darin fast der gantze handel von Mitteldingen erkleret wird, widder die schedliche Rotte der Adiaphoristen. Item ein brieff des ehrwürdigen Herrn D. Joannis Epini superintendenten zu Hamburg, auch von diesem handel an Illyricum geschrieben. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger. (see Liber de Veris et Falsis)</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 242, 246, 255, 257, 274
<i>Bulla des Antichrists, dadurch er das volck Gottes widderumb inn den eisern ofen der Egiptischen gefengknis denckt zuziehen, gleichstimmig mit ds Meintzischen Rabsakes briefe. Daraus wol zuvernemen, was der Teufel durch seine beide tugent, das ist, durch den Mörderischen krieg wider Kirche Gottes, und durch seine lügen, als da sind, Concilium, Interim, Mittelding, Chorrock, denckt auszurichten. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Christiana Admonitio de uitando impij Adiaphoristarum fermenti contagio. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger] (see Eine Christliche vermanung zur bestendigkeit...?)</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 521
<i>Eine Christliche vermanung zur bestendigkeit, inn der waren reinen Religion Jhesu Christi, unnd inn der Augsburgischen bekenntnis. Geschrieben an die Meissnische Kirche, unnd andere, so das lauttere Evangelium Jhesu Christi erkant haben. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter. (see Christiana Admonitio de uitando...?)</i>	
<i>Cleri Fletus. Est deploratio perditate maliciae Clericorum seu Spiritualium Antichristi, olim ante annos 100, vel amplius ab aliquo pio, templi Domini</i>	

<i>repurgatinem [sic] videre cupiente, conscripta.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.	
<i>Contra Novos Detzelios Bullarum Iubilaei Antichristi precones. Item tres Bullae de Iubilaeo.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger. (see <i>Widder die newen Detzel...</i> )	Kaufman, <i>Das Ende</i> , 523
<i>Contra quaedam interimistica et adiaphoristica scripta, quae a multis Gasparo Huberino tribuuntur. Item locus Brentii, praesentibus Christi &amp; Belial conciliationibus admodum conveniens.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	
<i>Das der Bapst mit seinem hoffe das rechte Babylon und Babylonische Hure sey. Durch den hochgelarten Franciscum Petrarum einen Welsher, der für 150. jarn gelebt hat.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]	
<i>Declaratio Tyrpitudinis peccati eorum, qui per concilium, Interim aut adiaphora a Christo ad Antichristum deficiunt.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 522
<i>Duo Scripta Dvorum Doctorum Lipsiae adiaphoricis corruptelis opposita, item epistolae aliquot eiusdem argumenti.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 520
<i>Erklärung der schendlichen Su(e)nde der jenigen die durch das Concilium, Interim, und Adiaphora, von Christo zum Antichrist fallen.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 522
<i>Etliche greiffliche gewisse und scheinbarliche warzeichen: Daraus ein jeder, wie geringes verstands er auch sey, Wo er nur zu erforschung der warheit geneigt isti [sie] vermercken kan, das die Lehre der Evangelischen des Herrn Christi Lehre selbs ist, und das der Papsten Lehr falsch, Gottlos, und vom Antichrist erfunden is.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	
<i>Etliche tröstliche vermanungen in sachen das heilige Gottliche Wort betreffend, zu dieser betrübtten zeit sehr nützlich und tröstlich zu lesen. D. Martinus Luther Anno M.D.XX. Preface by Flacius.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	
<i>Evidens Probation quod omnes, qui scripta contra Interim &amp; Adiaphora, quique Magdeburgenses persequuntur, aut persequi iuuant, sint vere Christi filij Dei persequutores.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter] (see <i>Klerliche beweisung, das alle die jenige...</i> )	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 522
<i>Forma inquisitionis Hispanicae instituta in inferiori Germania Anno 1550.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.	
<i>Eine freuntliche, demütige und andechtige errinerung an das heilige Volck, und Küningliche priestertumb des Antichrists, von der besserung des heiligen Canons oder Stilmessen.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter. (see <i>Amica humilis et devota admonitio ad gentem sanctam...</i> )	
<i>Ein grausam Meerwunder, den Bapst beteutende, zu Rom gefunden, und zu Wittenberg erstlich Anno 23 und darnach abermal Anno 46. mit der auslegung Philippi gedruckt.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 306-319
<i>Gru(e)ndliche verlegung aller Sophisterey, so Junker Jssleb, D. Jnterim, Morus, Pfeffinger, D. Geitz und die andere Adiaphoristen, das Leipsische Interim zu beschlo(e)nen, gebrauchen.</i> [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 522; Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 255; Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 87, 90
<i>Klerliche beweisung, das alle die jenige, welche die schriften widder das Interim und Mittelding feil zuhaben und zu lesen verbieten, Item, die zu dieser zeit, die von Magdeburg (auff waserley wise solchs geschehen mag) verfolgen oder verfolgen helffen, Christum den Son Gottes warhafftiglich selbs verfolgen. Geschrieben zur warnung an alle Christen auff das sie sich für dieser grawsamem, Teufflischen wütereey fleissig hüten.</i> Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger. (see <i>Evidens Probation quod omnes...</i> )	
<i>Eine köstliche Osterpredigt, zu Andtorff vor kurtzer zeit von einem Münch gehalten, das mann den Ketzern nicht leichtlich glauben soll.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<i>Omnia latina scripta hactenus sparsim contra Adiaphoricas fraudes &amp;</i>	Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 81, 84

<i>errores aedita, &amp; quaedam prius non excusa catalogum versa pagina indicabit. Omnia correcta &amp; aucta. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	
<i>Ordenung und Mandat Keiser Caroli V. vernewert im April Anno 1550. Zu aussrotten und zu vertilgen, die Secten und spaltung, Welche entstanden sind, widder unsern heiligen Christlichen glauben, Und wider die ordenung unser Mutter der heiligen Christlichen Kirchen. Item ein Register der verworffenen und verbottenen Büchern, Auch von guten Büchern, welche man inn der Schulen lesen mag. Item eine vermanung des Rectors Universitet zu Löven. Item ein ander Keisers mandat, von dem selbigen handel im 40. jar aussagen. Transferirt aus einem gedruckten Brabendischen Exemplar. Preface by Flacius. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	
<i>Ein register der hundert beschwerden, damit Deudschland von dem Bapst und den seinen jemmerlich beschwert, und uberladen, ja gentzlich verterbt wird, auffm reichstage zu Nürnberg Anno 1523. von dem reich dem Bapst ubersendet. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Ein schrifft, eines fromen Predigers aus der Türckey an Illyricum geschrieben, Darinnen angezeigt wird, wie es dort mit der Kirche und dem Evangelio zugehet. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter. (see Zwey schrifte zweier gelerten und frommer menner)</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 286-293
<i>Scripta quaedam Papae et Monarcharum, de concilio tridentino, ad cognoscendam veritatem admodum lectu utilia, nunc primum in publicum edita Cum praefatione Matthiae Flacii Illyrici. Basel.</i>	
<i>Ein Supplication and demütige bitt einer Christlichen Gemein in Schwaben, an ihren Rath, Darinne sie bittet, das man ihn wolle die Tauffe lassen, nach Christi einsetzung, wie sie es zuvor gehabt haben. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1550.</i>	
<i>Symphonia der Lehr oder Religion Christi und des Bapsts. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 250-257; 523
<i>Der Theologen bedencken, odder (wie es durch die ihren inn öffentlichem Drück genennet wirdt) Beschluss des Landtages zu Leiptzig, so im December des 48. Jars, von wegen des Auspurgischen [sic] Interims gehalten ist. Welchs bedencken odder beschluss wir, so da widder geschrieben, das Leiptzigsche Interim gennet haben. Mit einer Vorrede und Scholien, was und warumb jedes stück bisher fur unchristlich darin gestraffet ist. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter. (Available at Calvin College)</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 237, 278; Rein, <i>The Chancery of God</i> , 112
<i>Verlegung zweier schrifften, eines Augspurgischen Münchs, mit namen Joannes Fabri, von des Babsts Primat und von Beicht. Item achtzehen beweisungen, das S. Petrus zu Rom nicht gewesen sey. Item ein trostbrieff D. Lutheri an die Kirche zu Augsburt, itzt widder die Interimisten und Adiaphoristen, welche einen Christum one Schwert, Fewr und Creutz zimmern, nützlich zu lesen. Item eine schrifft widder die vermeinte gewalt des Babsts, vor 100 jarn, zur zeit des Concilii zu Basel, von einem D. Georgius Hembergensis genant geschrieben. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Widder die neue reformation D. Pfeffingers, des Meisnischen Thumbherrn. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 279
<i>Widder die neuen Detzel, oder aussrüffer der Ablas Bullen, und Antichristischen Jubil yars. Item drey Bullen vom Jubel yar. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter. (see <i>Contra Novos Detzelios</i>...)</i>	
<i>Widder die unchristliche vermanungsschafft, des Bisthumbs zu Naumburg. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Widder die vermeinte gewalt, und Primat des Bapstes, zu dieser zeit, da die gantze welt sich beflisset, den ausgetriebenen Antichrist, widderumb in den tempel Christi zu setzen, nützlich zu lesen. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Widerlegung der Predigt von der allerheiligsten Antichristischen Missa des</i>	



<i>frembden Bischoffs von Sydon, Meintzischen Weihbischoff. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Widerlegung des Catechismi des Larven Bischoffes von Sidon. Magdeburg: [Michael Lotter]</i>	
<i>Wieder den neue Sophisterey, da nicht allein von den Feinden, sondern auch von etlichen der unsern, der Artickel von der Justification, wodurch wir fuer Gott gerecht werden, andefochten wird, Ein kurtzer und einfeltiger untrricht. Durch Petrum Arbitr [Matthias Flacius]. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 237
<i>Zwei capitel Polydori Virgilii von Namen und Stifffern der Mess, ausgangen zu einem anfang widder des Sydonij predigten. Daraus erscheinet, wie er in seinen predigten öffentlich leugt, da er sagt, das die gantze Christenheit von 1500. Jaren her die Papistische Mess allezeit eintrechtiglich gehalten habe. Und das der Canon in allen seinen stücken von der Apostel zeit her im brauch gewesen sey. Item, Widderlegung D. Mart. Luth. Des gewels der Stillmess, so man den Canon nennet. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Zwey schriffte zweier gelerten und frommer menner, Widder die Adiaphoristische verfelschung. Gestelt zu Leiptzig, gantz nützlch zu lesen. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter. (see <i>Duo Scripta Dvorum Doctorum Lipsiae...</i>)</i>	
<b>1551</b>	Appears In:
<i>Antwort Matth. Fl. Illyr. auff etliche Beschuldigung D. Gei. Maiores und D. Pommers. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, ca. 1551]</i>	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypse</i> , 270-271
<i>Buspredict für die öffentlichen Sünde jtziger zeit, die falschen Brüder, Nemlich für die Verlasser, Verleugker, Abtrünnige und Verfloger jhrer eignen Religion, an jrhen Brüdern. Durch Nicol: Gallum, und Matth: Fla: Illyr: [Magdeburg]: [Christian Rödinger]</i>	
<i>Contra Commentitium primatum Papae. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 540
<i>Das alle Verfolger der Kirchen Christi zu Magdeburgk, Christi des Herrn selbs verfolger sindt. Geschrieben zur warnung an alle Christen, und sonderlich an das Kriegvolch der Feinde. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.</i>	
<i>Ein geistlicher trost dieser betrübten Magdeburgischen Kerchen Christi, das sie diese Verfolgung umb Gottes worts, und keiner andern ursach halben, leidet. [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]</i>	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 294-305; Rein, <i>The Chancery of God</i> , 195
<i>Gründliche verlegung aller Sophisterey, so D. Pfeffinger mit den andern Adiaphoristen, das Leiptzigsche Interim zubeschönen, gebraucht. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	Dingel, <i>Flacius als Schüler</i> , 86-87
<i>Gründliche verlegung aller Sophisterey, so Juncker Issleb, D. Interim, Morus, Pfeffinger, D. Geitz in seinem Gründlichen bericht und jhre gesellen, die andere Adiaphoristen, das Leipsische Interim zu beschönen, gebrauchen. [Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger]</i>	
<i>Newe Zeytung, Und Warhafftige Geschicht, die sich des vergangenen M.D.L. jars den 11. Februa. in den Löblichen Freyen Stadt Strassburg, in unser Frauwen Thumbstiff dz Münster genant an wirderauffrichtung der Grausamen und abschühelichen Gotslesterung Böpstlicher Messen, so man der Pfaffn Interim nennet, hat beygeben und zugetragen, Hievor niemals, yetzund aber durch Blasium Argen von Magdeburg in den Truck gegeben Anno domini M.D. Lj. Gantz lustig und lieblich zu singen in der Narren Kappen oder Stoltzen Müllerin weiss. Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.</i>	
<i>Eine Prophetische abconterfeihung des Tridentischen Conciliabuli. Durch D. Martinum Lutherum. Mit einer erklerung M. Fl. Illyr. Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger.</i>	
<i>Recusationschrift der Christlichen Augspurgischen Confessionsverwandten Stende, wider das vermeint, von Bapst Paulo dem ditten, weilandt zu Trient indicirt und angefangen Concilium, sampt einer gebürlichen provocation unnd erbietung, auff ein allgemein oder National, frey, Christlich und</i>	

<i>unparteiſch Concilium inn Deudtschen Landen.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.	
<i>Regulae et tractatus quidam de ſermone ſacrarum literarum, ad genuinam multorum difficilium locorum explicationem perutiles.</i> Magdeburg: Michael Lotter.	
<i>Reſponſio ad maledicta D. Ga. Maioris, Belial ſeu Antichriſti conciliatoris, &amp; nouorum Interim propugnatoris.</i> n. p.	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 541
<i>Reſponſio ad quasdam criminationes Pomerani.</i> n. p.	Kaufmann, <i>Das Ende</i> , 541
<i>Vermanung zur gedult und glauben zu Gott, im Creutz dieſer verfolgung Geſchrieben an die Kirche Chriſti zu Magdeburg.</i> Magdeburg: Chriſtian Rödinger.	
[Sigismund Cephalus, Pseud.?] <i>Warer Grundt und beweiſung das die unrecht handeln die jren Predigern verbieten, das Antichriſtiſch Bapſtumb mit ſeinen gregeln zuſtraffen.</i> Magdeburg: Chriſtian Rödinger.	
<i>Was umnd wie man ſich zu den künfftigen Conciloim zu Trydent verſehen möge. Auch was gutts davon zu verhoffen.</i> Bern: Matthias Apiarius.	
<i>Wider die newe ketzerey der Dikaeuſiſten, vom ſpruch Chriſti Joan. am XVI. Der heilig Geiſt wird die Welt ſtraffen umb die Gerechtigkeith, das ich zum Vater gehe.</i> Magdeburg: Chriſtian Rödinger.	
<i>Das ii. Capit. Syrach, Der xij. und xcij. Psalm mit kurtzen Ausſlegungen.</i> n. p.	
<b>1552</b>	Appears In:
<i>Ein Artglichs new Lied, von der zart ſchönen Frawen Interim, Auch von zucht, ehr und lob irer Schöpffern.</i> [Bern: Mathias Aparius]	
<i>Was von dem jetzt ausgeſchriebenen Tridentiſchen Concilio zu halten ſey, Drey geſprech.</i> [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<i>Wider den Evangelisten des heiligen Chorrockes, D. Geitz Maior.</i> Basel: [Magdeburg: Michael Lotter]	
<b>1559</b>	Appears In:
<i>Bericht M. Fla. Jlyrici, Von etlichen Artikeln der Chriſtlichen Lehr, und von ſeinem Leben, und enlich auch von den Adiaphoriſchen Handlungen, wider die falſchen Geticht der Adiaphoriſten.</i> [Jena: Thomas Rebart]	Moritz, <i>Interim und Apokalypſe</i> , 271