

Andreas J. Beck (Hg.), Melanchthon und die Reformierte Tradition, Göttingen (Vandenhoeck + Ruprecht) 2016, 250 S. (Refo500 Academic Studies, 6), ISBN 978-3-525-55031-1, EUR 90,00.

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Gerhard Bode, St. Louis, MO

This volume is a collection of contributions to an international conference commemorating the 450th anniversary of the death of Philip Melanchthon in 2010, focusing on the reformer's influence on Reformed theology and piety. The fourteen articles, in German and English, demonstrate the impact of Melanchthon's work on the Reformed church and its theology in the German lands, Switzerland, England, Hungary, France, and the Netherlands. In this way, the reception of Lutheran theology most closely associated with the Wittenberg tradition is evident across European lands in which the Reformation took hold.

The collection, edited by Andreas J. Beck of the Evangelical Theological Faculty in Leuven, surveys Melanchthon's significance across a broad landscape with many different focal points, yet is centered around the theme of the entire volume: »Melanchthon and the Reformed Tradition«. To lead off the studies, Günter Frank (Bretten) provides a look at past Melanchthon commemorations as well as an overview of the current status of Melanchthon scholarship. Andreas Mühling (Trier) surveys the personal relationship between Melanchthon and the Zürich theologians, Bullinger in particular. Through the existing correspondence, Mühling shows how the efforts to reach doctrinal agreement on the Lord's Supper resulted in disappointment and misunderstanding.

Several contributions explore the influence of Melanchthon's Scripture interpretation and doctrinal formulation. Machiel A. van den Berg (Zoetermeer) investigates the question of Melanchthon's apocalypticism by considering his historical-prophetic interpretation of the prophecy of Daniel, one with a »promise of hope for salvation«, with a comparison to that of Calvin (p. 45). Antonie Vos (Leuven) studies Melanchthon's changing articulations on the freedom of the will in various editions of his *Loci communes theologici*, and how his necessity-contingency distinction informed later Reformed scholasticism.

Henk van den Belt (Groningen) searches into the theme of Word and Spirit in Melanchthon's *Loci communes*, in which he reveals a shift from an emphasis on the work of the Spirit in a believer to an emphasis on the role of the external Word of God in preaching through which the Spirit renews the heart. Van den Belt suggests that, in the context of later theological discussion between the Lutherans and the Reformed, Melanchthon develops a more Lutheran nuance on the theme. Andreas J. Beck explores Melanchthon's meaning for Reformed scholasticism, especially through his *Loci communes*, noting the significance of Melanchthon's role in the formalization of theological method,



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but not as the »pioneer« of Reformed scholasticism as has been suggested. Anthony Milton (Sheffield) narrates the account of Melanchthon's impact on English Protestantism between 1560 and 1660, describing it as a »subterranean« influence through his confessional writings, covenant theology, and practical approach to doctrine and the Christian life. Noting the English Reformation's perception of Melanchthon as the irenic leader of a »moderate Lutheran Reformation« who was persecuted by his opponents, Milton explains Melanchthon's attractiveness both to Anglican and the puritan traditions creating an »English Melanchthon«. Nicola Stricker (Paris/Düsseldorf) surveys Melanchthon's imprint on the Reformed tradition in France. Acknowledging the paucity of textual sources, Stricker traces Melanchthon's relationship to French Protestants, especially through Moïse Amyraut, revealing how Melanchthon played a key role in the development of the doctrine of predestination and covenant theology among French Calvinists.

Contributors to the volume also consider Melanchthon's influence on practical theology. Kees de Groot (Nunspeet) inquires after Melanchthon's teaching on homiletics, demonstrating that it was closely connected to his understanding of rhetoric, and his view of the role of the sermon as proclamation of the Gospel. Martin H. Jung (Osnabrück) discusses Melanchthon's impact on the Reformed *praxis pietatis* through his catechetical and doctrinal works, in addition to his Latin writings on prayer, books of Bible passages, commentaries and other works for the laity, suggesting that Melanchthon be regarded as the »Praeceptor europaeus pietatis«. András Szabó (Budapest/Komárno) focuses on Melanchthon's impact on the school in Sárospatak in the sixteenth century, identifying the prominence of the reformer, as well as that of a number of former Wittenberg students, in the development of the Calvinist schools and churches in Hungary.

Frank van der Pol (Kampen) observes how Melanchthon's spiritual impact in the Netherlands in the sixteenth century, through his commentary on Colossians and a Dutch translation of his *Loci communes*, waned among Dutch Calvinists, but was revived in the seventeenth century by the Dutch Reformed Pietists. In the case study of Simon Oomius, Van der Pol shows how Melanchthon was portrayed in a positive light through an exploration of his practical theology stressing the centrality of the doctrine of justification, the practice of thankfulness, an emphasis on preaching the Scripture, and the understanding that knowledge of the trinitarian God should be focused on practical Christian piety in daily life.

The historical significance of Melanchthon's confessional writings also is examined. Johannes Hund (Mainz) reviews the debate among the Reformed on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the *Confessio Augustana* in 1830, and the reassessment of Melanchthon at the time. The debate centered on the interpretation of the *Confessio* in several ways, including its function as a norm for doctrine and life in keeping with its emphasis on the doctrine of justification, and as a foundation for faith, but one to be expressed in the freedom of Christian conscience. An enduring result of Melanchthon's approach in



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the *Confessio* remains his hope for true union on the basis of the document as a statement of faith. Matthias Freudenberg (Saarbrücken) makes a study of Melanchthon's reception within the Reformed tradition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From Schleiermacher's use of Melanchthon's teaching of justification in Augustana IV and its connection to the Christian life, to Heppe's appropriation of Melanchthon's confessional writings for the purpose of finding theological union between the Lutherans and the Reformed, to Barth's application of Melanchthon's views on the Trinity, ethics, soteriology, and faith, Freudenberg shows the historical impact of Melanchthon's theology as well as possibilities for it within Reformed theology in the future.

The collection offers insight into Melanchthon's meaning for the Reformation outside the Wittenberg tradition, and beyond the sixteenth-century context. By bringing clear perspectives on Melanchthon as a reformer whose work impacted the Reformed tradition across Europe, the editor and authors of these studies have made a valuable contribution to Melanchthon studies and to Reformation scholarship in an engaging and refreshing manner.



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