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The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany

ERIKA RUMMEL

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Introduction

The new edition of the *Theologische Realenzyklopedie*, the first to include an entry on confessionalism, defines it as the exclusive focusing on one's own confession and its differentiation from other doctrinal formulations.[1] The process of confessionalization is now recognized as a significant aspect of the Reformation and an incisive development in the history of early modern Europe.[2] It has received considerable scholarly attention over the past twenty years. Heinz Schilling and Wolfgang Reinhard, who were in the vanguard of research into the phenomenon, have noted its political, social, and intellectual dimensions.[3] Most studies, however, have concentrated on the first two: the proliferation of church ordinances, the interaction between church and state authorities, and the control of social behavior through church discipline. Those concerned with the intellectual dimension of confessionalization tend to focus on its effects in the field of education. This book examines the *Kulturbedeutung* of confessionalization in a broader sense, studying its role in the transformation of habits of thought.[4]

Humanism penetrated Northern Europe a generation before Luther began his career as a reformer. A great deal has therefore been written about the influence of humanism on the Reformation, much of it in response to Moeller's epigrammatic assertion *Ohne Humanismus keine Reformation*.[5] My study reverses the question, asking: How did the Reformation affect humanism? It is clear that the intellectual movement shaped the Reformation Debate and was being shaped by it in turn. Weighed in the balance, however, the religious movement was preponderant. It was, after all, driven by the twin forces of popular demand and professional interest, whereas humanism was advanced by an educated minority only. It is correct therefore to say that humanism influenced the course of the Reformation, but the dynamics of the relationship are better described by saying that humanism was coopted, perhaps even exploited, in the religious debate. Reformers traded on the popularity of humanism to promote their cause among young intellectuals; Catholic reactionaries traded on its notoriety to enlist the support of the establishment against it. In both camps, those who had been trained in the *studia humaniora* plucked from its cornucopia what was useful for the advancement of their cause and transformed or suppressed what was unsuited to their purpose. Accordingly, they employed humanistic philology and humanistic concepts of history to make their

point; they used humanistic pedagogy to inculcate orthodoxy; they reshaped civic humanism in their image; but they suppressed the humanistic rhetoric of doubt. The transformation thus effected amounted to a confessionalization of humanism. This appropriation of humanistic ideas and their translation into the idiom of the Reformation debate is the subject of this book.

The sources examined in this context are primarily texts originating in the Habsburg realm and dating from the first half of the sixteenth century; that is to say, they represent the region that gave birth to the Reformation movement and the period that saw a radical change in the perception of the relationship between humanism and the Reformation. The term confessionalization is usually associated with developments in the second half of the sixteenth century,[6] but evidence cited in my study will show that the intellectual foundations for the process were laid in the 1520s and 1530s.

Because my study focuses on the fate of humanistic thought, I examine primarily the writings of men of letters who were active members of the humanistic "republic of letters." Professional theologians, even those who could lay claim to the title "humanist" on account of their skill and range of pursuits, form a supporting cast. If theologians move to center stage, as, for example, in the cases of Urbanus Rhegius and Wolfgang Capito, the focus is on their progression from humanist to theologian and the implications of this reorientation. Classifying writers in the sixteenth century as "theologians" or "humanists," respectively, can of course be problematic. In affixing labels, I have generally adopted the stated priorities of individuals and the verdict of their contemporaries.[7] Erasmus, for example, was until the mid-1520s frequently addressed as a "theologian," but in later years critics pointedly denied him the title, and by 1530 his name had become synonymous with humanism. Melanchthon, by contrast, successfully engaged in both disciplines. In later years, however, and especially after Luther's death, it became clear that his lasting contribution was in the field of theology. For this reason I usually cite Erasmus as a spokesman of humanism and refer to Melanchthon in the context of Lutheran theology.[8] The availability of biographical sources determined the specific group of individuals studied in the present context. No thinking person in Reformation Germany could avoid engagement with confessional issues, but not everyone left a substantial record documenting this engagement. Episodic evidence, of which there is a great deal, has only limited paradigmatic value. What is needed for historiographical purposes is sustained evidence in sufficient quantity to make the writer's mental progress apparent and tangible. My study therefore concentrates on writers that meet both requirements: a commitment to humanism and documented engagement with Reformation issues.

Approaches taken to the subject of the relationship between humanism and the Reformation vary considerably, ranging from Erich Meuthen's "Charakter und Tendenzen des deutschen Humanismus," a carefully qualified account, to Heinz Liebing's intriguing opinion piece "Die Ausgänge des europäischen Humanismus."[9] In Liebing's view, humanists had to choose between freedom and security. Confessionalization and the institutional church offered stability, but it was bought at the price of liberty: "Undogmatic humanism . . . was rewarded with the freedom to determine its own content."[10] Liebing's subjective approach makes for stimulating

reading and is entirely suitable for an essay; in a full-scale study, however, detachment remains the historian's summum bonum. It is an elusive virtue, to be sure. Accounts of the past are inevitably filtered through contemporary perceptions and sensibilities. It has been my aim therefore to let the historical witnesses speak, and to document rather than evaluate sixteenth-century opinions. For this purpose it seemed more pertinent to examine, for example, whether writers in the sixteenth century perceived a link between humanism and the Reformation than to establish whether such a link existed; to note that Calvin thought men of letters likely candidates for Nicodemism rather than to gauge their actual propensity for prevarication; to point out that reformers were alternately called foes and champions of humanism rather than to assess the merit of these designations. Such an approach leaves contradictions unresolved. The witnesses cited are caught in the maelstrom of a fierce debate. Being in the very process of shaping the religious and intellectual climate of their time, they cannot serve as impartial observers or offer disinterested interpretations of the events. Their testimony is characterized by a (usually identifiable) bias as well as a certain fluidity. They sharply contradict each other and often change their own minds as time progresses. The result of documenting perceptions rather than gauging their truth value is an account that is open-ended but (I hope) retains an authentic historical flavor.

The book is arranged thematically, loosely following the sequence of events that made each subject topical. Chapter 1 investigates the use of humanism for propaganda purposes. For a decade after the posting of the Ninety-Five Theses confusion reigned over the relationship between humanists and reformers. Both champions and adversaries of the Reformation suggested that there existed a close link between the two movements or that their aims and ideas were interchangeable. The confusion is encapsulated in a proverbial expression current in the 1520s: "Either Erasmus lutheranizes, or Luther erasmianizes." It was unclear, however, to what extent this muddling of issues was a simple misunderstanding. Erasmus, for one, suggested that Catholic apologists deliberately leveled the differences between the two movements in an effort to ruin them both under the label of "heresy"; conversely, Hutten openly advocated maintaining a common front for political purposes, even though he was fully aware of the differences in aims and methods. Both parties were fond of fashioning historical constructs and producing mental associations between the two movements by drawing a timeline from Valla and Reuchlin to Erasmus and Luther.

While chapter 1 examines the perception that humanists and reformers were comrades-in-arms, chapter 2, which focuses on educational ideals, deals with the perception that reformers had replaced the old scholastic foe as the chief enemies of *studia humaniora*. The contemporaneous rise of Lutheranism and decline of Northern universities prompted the notion of a cause-and-effect relationship. This perception was fiercely combated by mainstream reformers, who pointed out that their reputation as foes of learning was due to the anti-intellectualism of a radical fringe. They also blamed the decline of learning on the materialism of parents who no longer considered education a good investment at a time when the Catholic system of ecclesiastical preferment was in danger of collapse. As it turns out, the decline was halted when both Catholics and Protestants recognized the importance of schooling in the process of confessionalization. Protestant school orders, drawn up

in the late 1520s and early 1530s, adopted humanistic ideals in placing emphasis on language training and in portraying education as a civic duty rather than a luxury. Yet in no other area was the confessionalization of humanism more pronounced than in the area of education. The focus of the Protestant school curriculum was, as Bugenhagen put it, on "dogma and languages," a sharp reduction of the humanistic goal of encyclopedic learning. Its central aim was to produce citizens who would serve God and the state; the aim of humanists, by contrast, had been the fulfillment of the individual's potential. While both movements emphasized moral education, humanists promoted a nondenominational, personal piety that could be inspired even by pagan writers; moral education in Protestant school ordinances, however, focused on the biblical example and its creed-specific interpretation. The humanistic ideal of self-realization, moreover, was not suited to the Protestant anthropology of the sinner redeemed by grace alone; and the humanistic emphasis on intellectual curiosity and the intense pleasure afforded by learning was replaced by work ethics. Of course, the confessionalization of education was not limited to the Protestant camp. Indeed, Wolfgang Reinhard has demonstrated that the process was common to all religious parties.[11] Jesuit schools were as famous for their humanistic curriculum as they were notorious for their success in religious indoctrination. In this scenario, humanism as an educational program was curtailed, and academic freedom circumscribed by doctrinal considerations.

Chapter 3 deals with the humanistic *ars dubitandi* and the method of arguing on both sides of a question. In the Reformation era humanists were frequently typecast as skeptics and Lucianic scoffers. Three names in particular were associated with skepticism: Desiderius Erasmus, Heinrich Agrippa of Nettesheim, and Sebastian Castellio. In fact, their writings may be interpreted as efforts to Christianize classical skepticism. Erasmus' polemic with Luther over free will serves as an illustration of this process. Erasmus advocated examining both sides of a doctrinal question. If evidence could be cited in support of both sides, classical skeptics suspended judgment. Erasmus, the Christian skeptic, was able to overcome the logical impasse by relying for a definitive judgment on church authority and on the consensus of believers embodied in tradition. Agrippa supplied an alternative solution. His skepticism terminated in fideism. After deprecating learning and knowledge in his *Vanity of Sciences*, he concluded that certainty could be found only in the Word of God. Castellio advocated a combination of rationalism, biblicism, and fideism. If valid arguments could be found on both sides of a question, he made the Bible the touchstone of truth. Some truths, however, were unfathomable and accessible to the human mind only through faith and divine revelation, he said. The skeptical method of investigation was rejected by both Catholic and Protestant theologians, even in its Christianized form, because it induced doubt, and doubt prevented commitment. The religious conflict, however, had been exacerbated to a point that left no room for detachment or doubt. The Holy Spirit was no skeptic, as Luther put it.

The confessionalization of humanism was not an abstract process; it transformed the lives of individual humanists. Chapter 4 describes their anxieties in the face of peer pressure and intimidation by the authorities. At first, humanists, following Erasmus' example, attempted to remain on the sidelines of the debate. Erasmus' refusal to take sides was predicated on the idea that the truth must be carefully hus-

banded rather than proffered indiscriminately or asserted aggressively. When the events at the Diet of Worms made neutrality impossible, those who were not ready to commit themselves unequivocally had two options: withdrawal and professional reorientation, or Nicodemism. Martin van Dorp, Beatus Rhenanus, and Willibald Pirckheimer exemplify the first trend. Dorp ceased to publish after a run-in with the faculty of theology at Louvain, keeping the fruit of his research private; Beatus left Basel on the eve of the city's reformation and turned his interest from religious to secular texts; Pirckheimer resigned his position on the Council of Nürnberg when the city turned Protestant and, after a brief engagement in the Reformation debate, suppressed the remainder of his writings.

Chapter 5 investigates Nicodemism and the perception that humanistic learning fostered indifference or hypocrisy. A closer examination of the cases of Urbanus Rhegius and Wolfgang Capito, the latter notorious for his attempt at legitimating Nicodemism, fails to provide a clear illustration of this theory. It appears that the view was the result of a string of associations. It rested on the claim that humanists advocated a methodology of doubt and therefore lacked commitment; that they were word-spinners, interested in style more than substance, and therefore lacked sincerity; that they reduced theology to an academic discipline and thus manifested a secular spirit. The same qualities were associated also with Nicodemites. It was tempting therefore to establish a connection between Nicodemism and *gens de lettres*, as Calvin did, for example. Erasmus' advocacy of "husbanding" or withholding the truth and the perception that he was the principal spokesman of humanism may have added support to the notion that humanists were inclined to Nicodemism.

Chapter 6 explores the contribution of humanism to the idea of a religious peace through compromise and accommodation. The comments of humanists like Petrus Mosellanus, Crotus Rubeanus, Desiderius Erasmus, and Juan Vives on the language appropriate to the religious debate foster the idea of accommodation. They urged the adoption of the classical rhetorical rules of *aptum* (appropriateness relative to the circumstances) and *ethos* (concern for the dignity of the speaker). Considerations for these rhetorical ideals were to ensure that the religious debate proceeded in an atmosphere of civility, flexibility, and cooperation. The humanists' aim was to persuade rather than refute the opponent, and thus to arrive at a consensus. The suggestion that rhetorical ideals be applied to the religious debate was rejected by theologians on both sides because of their inherent relativity. The same ideals were, however, welcomed in political circles bent on establishing peace and order. This is evident from the reactions to the proposals contained in Erasmus' *On the amiable concord of the church*, which suggested mutual concessions. There was determined resistance to this idea on the part of theologians, notably the Catholic Jacques Masson and the Lutheran Antonius Corvinus. Making concessions obviously did not aid in the process of confessionalization and in fact was counterproductive. Later advocates of accommodation, such as Georg Witzel and Joris Cassander, or the architects of the church ordinance of Jülich-Cleves, were identified as disciples of Erasmus. However, their proposals lacked the epistemological basis characteristic of the Erasmian plea for consensus. For the Christian skeptic, consensus was an essential tool in the decision-making process. For the councilors of Jülich-Cleves and like-minded men, consensus had primarily political significance. Witzel

attempted to reach consensus through a historical investigation that was to uncover the authentic teaching of the early church. This was no doubt a humanistic, but not necessarily an Erasmian, approach. The efforts of Witzel and the councilors of Jülich-Cleves were more closely related to civic humanism and the ideal of a well-ordered society than to Erasmus' Christian humanism.

In the era of confessionalization, then, humanistic concepts were adopted, suppressed, or reshaped, depending on their usefulness in a given religious context. While the impact of confessionalization in the social and political spheres became apparent only in the second half of the sixteenth century, the transformation of habits of thought began much earlier. When Luther rose to prominence, humanism became a pawn in the public relations battle between reformers and Catholic reactionaries. Humanistic ideals of education were absorbed by both Catholics and reformers and tailored to suit their respective confessional goals. The humanistic rhetoric of doubt, by contrast, did not lend itself to confessionalization and was rejected by theologians on both sides of the debate; the justification of Nicodemism, which was by some regarded as a feature of humanism, met with strong misgivings. Similarly, the idea of accommodation, which had multiple roots in the humanistic tradition, had no merit in the eyes of theologians because of its inherent relativity. It was, however, a concept popular at princely courts, where it was promoted by humanistically trained councilors.

In his essay on confessionalization in Reformation Europe, Wolfgang Reinhard lists eight prerequisites or stages in the process: (1) firm dogmatic conviction, and unhesitating action ("Entscheidungsfreude"), which entails intolerance and the rejection of accommodation; (2) organized dissemination of ideas; (3) planned propaganda and suppression of counterpropaganda through censorship; (4) indoctrination through schooling; (5) enforcement of discipline; (6) norming of rites; (7) norming of terminology; and (8) political integration.[12] The first four points of this program set the Reformation on a collision course with humanism. The victory of the religious over the cultural movement, that is, the successful confessionalization of Europe, changed the trajectory of humanistic thought. It stunted the development of a Christianized skeptic philosophy that would have complemented the humanistic rhetoric of doubt, and for a time placed a confessional grid on humanistic philology and historiography. The diplomatic solution to the religious debate suggested by humanists was an idea that held appeal in a Germany weary of civic disorder and armed conflict. Religious peace could not be realized, however, as long as rulers used religious divisions to serve their own political ends. It is perhaps this failure to yield practical results that prompted Liebing to speak of "the lack of a political humanism" in Reformation Germany.[13]

Humanists and Reformers as Allies

A Constructive Misunderstanding?

When Luther first came to the attention of readers in Germany, his ideas were regarded as an extension of Erasmus' program of reform. It was a perception widespread enough to take on a proverbial cast. "Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther hatched it" became a popular tag.[1] Since Erasmus' name was closely associated with humanism and Luther's soon came to stand for the Reformation, the two movements were conceptually linked as well. Erasmus reacted angrily to this oversimplification. He saw himself neither as a forerunner nor as a soulmate of Luther. "It is silly for some people to be so pleased with the witticism 'Either Luther erasmianizes or Erasmus lutheranizes,'" he wrote. "I have as much in common with Luther as the cuckoo with the nightingale."[2] The notion that the ideas of humanists and reformers were interchangeable arose from a peculiar combination of circumstances. The confusion was fostered, first of all, by a fluidity of terms and an overlap of issues. The chronology of events and the migratory pattern of academics also suggested an internal connection. Most important, however, the differences between the two movements were deliberately leveled, and the resulting confusion exploited for its propaganda value by both parties in the Reformation debate. This constituted a first step in the confessionalization of humanism.

The Fluidity of Terms and the Range of Issues

Terms like "diplomat" or "philosopher" may refer either to a personal quality or a profession. Normally, readers have no difficulty choosing a meaning appropriate to the context. Problems of interpretation arise only during transitional phases, when an emerging profession co-opts a term designating a personal characteristic or skill. During this phase people who are not attuned to the emerging trend may use the word indiscriminately or confuse the new with the traditional meaning. In Socrates' time, for example, Athenians had to contend with a new breed of sophists, who were not just "wise men," as the word suggests, but professional teachers of a rhetoric designed to make their disciples appear wise. Similar developments characterize the usage of the words "humanist" and "theologian" in the sixteenth century, except that in the case of "humanist" the usual progression from a general to a more specific

meaning was reversed. It turned from a professional title into a term loosely indicating a cultural affiliation.

The word *humanista* is first documented in fifteenth-century Italy where it denoted a teacher of the liberal arts; the term "theologian" by contrast was still vaguely defined and had a poetic ring. Coluccio Salutati was able to speak in one breath of the prophet's and the poet's calling and could claim that the "intrinsic meaning [of the poet] accords with the theological truth."[3] In Northern Europe, by contrast, theology had been since the thirteenth century a well-entrenched academic discipline, and theologians wanted to see the designation restricted to holders of the appropriate academic degree. Its application to others was viewed with suspicion by professors guarding their academic turf. The term "humanist," conversely, had by the sixteenth century acquired a much broader meaning than teacher of liberal arts. It was no longer merely a professional designation but had come to denote a cultural preference. It could be applied to anyone favoring the New Learning and was associated with progressive thinking. The champions of humanism included not only professional teachers of grammar and rhetoric, but also jurists, physicians, and, for that matter, theologians.[4] The confusion over "humanists" and "reformers," that is, over reform-minded intellectuals in general and reform-minded theologians in particular, was a by-product of these terminological shifts.

The fluidity of terms was one factor contributing to the confusion; the complexity of the issues at stake was another. A certain overlap in the causes promoted by humanists and reformers, respectively, suggested that the Reformation debate was a continuation of an ongoing debate over curriculum between scholastic theologians and teachers of language arts. A spat of polemics at German universities in the early 1500s revolved around the scope of academic disciplines and their hierarchy in the curriculum. In both areas of conflict, questions of orthodoxy and respect for the church formed a subtext, which facilitated a crossover from the academic to the doctrinal sphere, and a decade later, from humanism to the Reformation. Humanists transcending the scope of their discipline and applying principles of textual and literary criticism to Scripture were seen by theologians as interlopers and dilettantes liable to blunder into exegetical minefields and give rise to heterodox views. Later, when the reformers cited texts in the primary languages to corroborate their doctrinal positions, Catholic apologists duly noted their indebtedness to humanistic philology. Thus a conceptual link was formed between humanism and the Reformation. The second issue, hierarchy, pitted theologians, who traditionally had preeminence at Northern universities, against challengers in other faculties. There were skirmishes between theologians, jurists, and philosophers, but the main battles were fought between theologians and teachers of language arts, that is, humanists in the original sense of the word. Their stock was now on the rise and their popularity with students was upsetting the traditional pecking order. Members of the higher faculties were disgruntled that generous stipends were paid to star performers among humanists, who often held no formal academic degree. Although the polemics revolved around mundane issues such as salaries and protocol, humanists were often depicted in darker colors: as challengers of Queen Theology and rebels against a sacred order. Again, this blend of academic and religious issues permitted, and indeed facilitated, a shift of paradigms from humanism to the Reformation.

Chronological Patterns

Another factor contributing to confusion was the chronological pattern of events. The earliest attacks on Luther's writings came at the heels of a series of polemics involving high-profile humanists: Jacques Lefèvre, Johann Reuchlin, and Desiderius Erasmus. Since the same names cropped up in each case among the attacking and defending parties and their coterie, it was tempting to draw the conclusion that the same issues were at stake and that the defendants argued from a common platform. Indeed, earlier attacks on Lorenzo Valla, Sebastian Brant, Peter of Ravenna, and a score of lesser humanists at German universities likewise seemed to fit the pattern. This strengthened the perception that all the polemics were permutations of the same dispute, that is, a power struggle between advocates of change and reactionaries wanting to preserve the status quo. Not surprisingly, Luther was seen at first as yet another activist battling a mentally inert and corrupt establishment. Such perceptions, which may have arisen spontaneously, were milked by interested parties for their propaganda value. Polemicists on both sides of the dispute showed a tendency to forge historical links between disparate cases and develop a radical typology of the enemy. Conceptual links between the various cases were created through the use of recognizable catchphrases and a "genealogical" grouping of names.

The phrase of choice for theologians battling humanists was "putting one's sickle into another man's crop."[5] The metaphor had been transferred from canon law to the academic sphere, where it was used as a signal to alert readers to a specific type of offense: trespassing by unqualified persons on territory reserved for professional theologians. The accusation of trespassing was brought against a wide range of humanists, from Valla in fifteenth-century Italy to Reuchlin and Erasmus in sixteenth-century Germany. Valla's collation of gospel manuscripts earned him a censure for "putting his sickle into another man's crop." His collation was published posthumously by Erasmus, who went on to edit and annotate the text of the New Testament and, as a result, was likewise charged with "putting his sickle into another's crop." A few years earlier, the Spanish philologist Elio Nebrija had his notes on scriptural usage confiscated by the Inquisitor Diego de Deza. In an apologia published after his rehabilitation in 1516 Nebrija revealed the nature of the alleged offense: he was seen as a meddling grammarian. A copy of his apologia in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid bears a marginal remark in a sixteenth-century hand accusing him of "putting his sickle into another man's crop."[6] Obviously the reader had Nebrija's case tagged and saw it as part of a pattern. The same accusation had been brought at the turn of the century against Polich of Mellerstadt, a physician at the University of Leipzig, who had discussed the relationship between theology and poetry. Sebastian Brant, a professional jurist, had a similar experience. His comments on the question of the immaculate conception in 1501, predictably earned him a charge of putting his "unfair sickle to another's crop." The key phrase appears again in accusations against the famous jurist and professor of Hebrew, Johann Reuchlin, whose troubles with the theologians of Cologne became a cause célèbre.[7] In all these cases the use of the catchphrase had the effect of labeling the case and making it part of a larger pattern. The implication was that humanists had no respect for theology, meddled in subjects of which they were ignorant, and were therefore

likely to offer incorrect or heterodox interpretations. It was a pattern that facilitated the later transfer of accusations from humanists to reformers.

Humanists contributed their part to the muddle by developing a group portrait of theologians as traditionally hostile to humanists. It was an exercise that involved creating a canon of cases by reciting, in a ritualistic manner, a litany of names. The examples of Valla, Reuchlin, Lefèvre, and Erasmus were regularly invoked; soon the list was extended to include Luther. Like the catchphrase of the theologians, the canon of names recited by the humanists created a collective identity and contributed to a historical construct linking humanism with the Reformation. The literary account of the Reuchlin Affair in the satirical *Letters of Obscure Men* (1515) serves as an example of the process. It shows how a historical context can be fashioned in a convincing manner. The anonymous authors of the satire provided frequent narrative links between Reuchlin's case and the troubles of other humanists. This had the effect of suggesting to readers a pattern of confrontations involving humanists and theologians. Once established, this pattern served as a rallying cry addressed to all humanists. The message was: Support Reuchlin now because you could be the next victim of the theologians. Thus the controversy surrounding Reuchlin turned into a propaganda war. It was a harbinger of the role humanism was to play in the Reformation and a prelude to the confessionalization of an essentially intellectual debate.

The Reuchlin affair unfolded in 1510 when Johann Pfefferkorn, a converted Jew, demanded the confiscation and destruction of Hebrew books allegedly dangerous to the Christian faith.[8] Emperor Maximilian, whose support he had sought, consulted the opinions of theological faculties and other experts, among them the jurist Johann Reuchlin. The universities, in particular the theologians of Cologne, took up Pfefferkorn's cause. When Reuchlin gave a dissenting opinion, recommending the preservation of Hebrew books unless they were explicitly hostile to the Christian faith, he became the focus of a controversy. The matter ended up in the papal court and, after a legal seesaw, resulted in Reuchlin being fined. The case was widely debated in humanistic circles because of its ramifications for the freedom to pursue academic research. The significant support Reuchlin received from humanistic quarters enabled him in 1514 to publish *Letters of Famous Men*, that is, letters of well-known humanists agreeing with his position. Soon another collection appeared, entitled *Letters of Obscure Men*, apparently in support of Reuchlin's opponents, but in fact lampooning their intransigence in a series of fictitious letters.[9]

Readers sympathetic to Reuchlin were delighted with the clever and witty manner in which the authors had fictionalized actual events.[10] However, what appeared to be a jeu d'ésprit was in effect a piece of advocacy. The authors were performing (and engaging their readers in) an act of historical interpretation. It is instructive to examine in more detail the transformation of fact into fiction. In 1519, Crotus Rubeanus, one of the reputed authors of *Letters of Obscure Men*, reported to Reuchlin that a monk "spluttered something about you, a jurist, having put your sickle into the theologians' crop."[11] *Letters of Obscure Men* offers an expanded version, turning the original account, which speaks of one theologian bringing an accusation against one specific individual, into a wholesale accusation. In the literary version, an unidentified theologian demands that "no jurist or poet should write anything con-

cerning theology, nor drag this new Latin of theirs into holy theology!" He gives two examples of trespassing: Reuchlin and "another fellow, Proverbia Erasmi [sic] by name." The catchphrase that labels the case is retained. "They are not grounded in that discipline," the theologian says. "[T]hey would for ever be putting their sickles into other men's corn."[12] In the fictionalized version, then, the reader is given a pointed reminder that the persecution of Reuchlin was not an isolated case but part of a pattern.

A similar process is applied to the experience of Johannes Aesticampianus. The humanist, who had a history of polemical involvements, became the focus of a controversy at the University of Leipzig and was ousted from his post in 1511. He turned his farewell speech into a diatribe against his enemies.[13] He lashed out against colleagues in the higher faculties who had disparaged his exposition of classical authors and discouraged students from attending his lectures. Among them were the theologians, "who hate the verses of the poets more than the sins of the Pharisees . . . but we shall leave them alone and not provoke their anger lest they treat us badly, for they have the power to acquit or crucify a man, as they please. Then there are the jurists. . . . they do not admit poets to their lecture hall and harass them, but we shall leave them alone, for they are able to acquit or condemn a man. Next come the physicians. . . . they regard sacred poetry good enough only to carry the train of treacherous and poisonous Medicine . . . but I let them off, too, for they are able to cure or kill poets with their draughts. Finally, there are the philosophers. Some of them have listened to me benevolently; others have ignored me, but the latter are in the great majority." Aesticampianus went on to say that he was expelled, not because of intellectual shortcomings or because of misconduct, but because of the envy and malice of his colleagues. There was a tradition at Leipzig of maltreating poets. They had driven out Celtis and Buschius—now it was his turn.

Aesticampianus' story is taken up in *Letters of Obscure Men*. Put into the mouth of a scholastic theologian, it undergoes a subtle transformation. The scholastic observes that Aesticampianus "extolled his own faculty, and reviled theology." He claimed that in academic processions "poets should always take precedence over Masters and Licentiates." As a result he was expelled and banned from teaching for ten years. Thus peace at the university was restored. One could only hope that his fate would serve as a warning to other troublemakers. "You must spread the news," says the fictitious scholastic, "and then perhaps Buschius will be served in like manner as was Aesticampianus. And when will you send me your book against Reuchlin?"[14] The fictitious account adapts Aesticampianus' real-life experience to heighten its propaganda value. The involvement of other faculty members is trimmed away to make the conflict one between humanists and theologians. At the same time the conflict is given topical significance by being linked with the case of Reuchlin. The time line established by Aesticampianus himself (he cites Celtis and Buschius) is thus extended to include the latest development.

Here and elsewhere the writers of *Letters of Obscure Men* create a historical context by associating Reuchlin, the hero of the book, with other humanists. The controversies surrounding Erasmus, Aesticampianus, and Buschius are not the only ones mentioned by the fictitious letter writers; Sebastian Brant, Peter of Ravenna, and Jacques Lefèvre also supply grist for the satirical mill. *Letters* thus becomes an

elaborate exercise in name-dropping meant to establish parallels. However, the authors merely hint that the cases are related; the literary genre absolves them from elaborating on the nature of the relationship. Thus the diversity of the cases is camouflaged and the only constant—the role of the theologians as accusers—magnified. In this caricature of the Reuchlin Affair theologians are one-dimensional figures. They are boorish reactionaries, one and all. The portrait of the humanists is two-dimensional. They are depicted not only as men of letters and scholars on the cutting edge of learning but also as reform-minded critics of the church unfairly labeled "heretics."

The thrust of the narrative becomes clear from numerous passages in which the two characteristics—men of letters and critics of the church—are combined. One letter describes the tribulations of "Magister Philipp Schlauraff," cursor in theology, who makes the rounds of German universities and is greatly irritated by the omnipresence of humanists. He mentions Hermann Buschius, Jacob Locher (a humanist involved in a controversy with theologians at Ingolstadt), several "Reuchlinists," Johannes Aesticampianus, Sebastian Brant, Willibald Pirckheimer, Philip Melanchthon, and Erasmus, whose address he gives as Froben's press in Basel "where many heretics abide."[15] Schlauraff's list is a hodgepodge of names. Jurists, theologians, and philologists are thrown together. An interest in humanism is the only discernible common element. Grouping the men together has a conceptually leveling effect. A few years later some of the humanists mentioned here became associated with Luther. Erasmus was made out to be the inspirational source of the reformer; Pirckheimer's name was appended to the papal bull condemning Luther; Melanchthon became Luther's right-hand man in Wittenberg. Thus, anyone reading *Letters of Obscure Men* in the 1520s could easily jump to the conclusion: Humanists are likely to turn into reformers.

The same association between humanists and reform-minded "heretics" is made in another of the fictitious letters. "All things are out of joint," the writer complains, "and heretics and mock Christians are springing up everywhere: Johann Reuchlin, Erasmus of Rotterdam, one Willibald Something-or-Other [Pirckheimer], together with Ulrich Hutten, Hermann Buschius, Jacob Wimpheling, who wrote against the Augustinians, and Sebastian Brant, who wrote against the Dominicans—the pity of it—and wantonly rails at them. Thereby many scandals arise within the faith." Again the names, casually thrown together, suggest a common agenda for humanists and critics of the church. The same tendency is apparent in a third fictitious letter. In this case, the writer first designates Erasmus a humanist, then makes him out a heretic. He juxtaposes his linguistic skills ("he is a sound Latinist"; "he writes fair Latin") with his criticism of the church: "He is an enemy of the monks and speaks very ill of them. . . . His views concerning St. George and St. Christopher and relics of saints and candles and the sacrament of confession are heterodox."[16] A few years after the appearance of *Letters of Obscure Men*, questions concerning the veneration of saints and the sacramental nature of confession—here connected with Erasmus the humanist and writer of "fair Latin"—became prominent issues in the Reformation debate. In retrospect, then, it was not difficult for readers to cast the humanists as "prereformers."

By producing a string of associations between polemics involving humanists,

some of whom later became associated with Luther, and by blending criticism of the academic establishment with criticism of the church, *Letters of Obscure Men* played a significant role in disseminating the message that humanists and reformers belonged to one and the same party. There are, however, numerous passages in the real correspondence of humanists and reformers that parallel the historicizing tendency of the satire. The process passes through two phases. At first, cases involving the victimization of humanists are strung together; later, Luther and other reformers are introduced as cosufferers. An exchange between Buschius and Eucharius Henner, a graduate of Heidelberg and canon at Speyr, is typical of the earlier phase, in which the names of humanists are linked. The Louvain theologians were after Erasmus, Henner wrote, just as the Cologne theologians had been after Reuchlin, and "if any such man arises, soon the barbarians everywhere band together to suppress him. Like unclean pigs they all come running to uproot a cultured seed." Buschius concurred. Edward Lee, one of the first scholars to attack Erasmus in print, had been suborned by the theologians of Louvain, he said, just as Ortvin Gratius had previously been enlisted by the Cologne theologians against Reuchlin. Both were cases of "the magisters fighting against good literature."[17] Reuchlin himself had earlier on portrayed his experience with the Cologne theologians as a case fitting a pattern: "The theologians believe that no one is learned except they themselves, and they regard themselves as the pillars of the Church. Many men have been harassed by certain members of this [theological] profession . . . , quite a few jurists, and all the poets. Finally they came down on me."[18] After Luther's works were condemned by the faculties of theology at Louvain and Cologne, the references postulating a connection between attacks on humanists were extended to include his case. Agrippa von Nettesheim, who had become a target of the theologians himself, made the connection in an apologia. He challenged his critics: "Tell me, you professors at Louvain and Cologne, what reputation have you gained as a result of fighting Reuchlin? . . . What advantage from going against Erasmus of Rotterdam, Lefèvre d'Etaples, and Peter of Ravenna?" What had been the advantage of agitating against Luther? They had merely fanned the flames, so that "the Lutheran affair grew from a spark into an immense conflagration."[19]

Like the authors of *Letters of Obscure Men*, the real-life correspondents, who grouped leading humanists together with Luther and other reformers, rarely offer an explanation for claiming a link between them. They do not elaborate on the ideas shared by the men thus linked; they merely note the common enemy: scholastic theologians. In retrospect some of the groupings found in their letters are decidedly odd and betray a confusion over party lines. For example, Christoph Scheurl, onetime rector of the University of Wittenberg and since 1512 legal advisor to the city of Nürnberg, made the mistake of connecting Luther with Eck. In 1517 he wrote that he had succeeded in forging a friendship between the two men! Even when the Leipzig debate between Eck and Luther obliged Scheurl to reconfigure his thought, he clung to the belief that humanists and reformers were in the same camp. Accordingly, he warned Eck that he was making enemies not only of Luther's supporters but also of "all Erasmians and Reuchlinists."[20]

A year later, Scheurl's compatriot, Willibald Pirckheimer placed Erasmus in a

lineup together with Reuchlin, Lefèvre, and Luther, all victims of harassment by scholastic theologians. He identified the common enemy, but not the party to which the victims belonged or the common characteristics that made them a target for the theologians. His explanation that the theologians had "a long-standing passion for the defamation of distinguished men and for resistance to everyone with high aspirations" hardly qualifies as an incisive analysis. Pirckheimer, who had been named in the papal bull as a Lutheran follower, had to be cautious, but even in a private document, an autograph draft of a letter to Pope Adrian VI, he fails to identify the common element supposedly uniting humanists and reformers. Again he identifies the common enemy (here, the Dominicans) as the only unifying element. The "Dominicasters" were "burning with hatred for good literature and were trying to suppress or even remove all scholars." Their machinations "forced the most learned men to join the Lutheran camp."[21] Melchior Vadianus, brother of the St. Gallen reformer, provided another, equally unsatisfactory explanation: "Erasmus, Reuchlin, and most of all, Luther are maligned, I believe, because they are speaking rather freely." If we are to believe the writer, it was not the content of their teaching but the form in which they expressed their opinions that aroused the ire of the theologians.[22] In the same vein Mutianus Rufus, who was active in the humanist circles of Erfurt and Gotha, called Erasmus the inspirational source of men who were shortly to become leaders of the Reformation. He praised Erasmus for his services to theology and letters: "All of us who are glad that theology has been restored by Erasmus, know Erasmus' divine service to the Christian cause. From him, as from a source, sprang forth men like Oecolampadius, Philip [Melanchthon], Martin [Luther]—oh, what great leading men of letters! How could the right kind of studies exist at all, if Erasmus who holds sway over the realm of both languages had not picked out the eyes of the crows and put together the whole, which now sparkles in all its details. It is true that Italy has promoted learning, but only secular learning. Erasmus, however, is our Mercury, the remarkable champion of profane and sacred letters and truly worthy of praise."[23] Again Erasmus is depicted as a "prereformer," but the common element in the teaching of Erasmus and the reformers Oecolampadius, Melanchthon, and Luther is not explained except in terms of a common enemy.

When Crotus Rubeanus was rector of the University of Erfurt in 1520, he had a *Wappentafel* inserted in the register of the university. It depicted the crest of the rector surrounded by those of Luther, Erasmus, Reuchlin, Mutianus Rufus, Hutten, Melanchthon, and a number of Erfurt humanists, among them Eobanus Hessus wearing the poet's laurel crown.[24] A similar, rather confusing, lineup of names appears in a dialogue written by Johann Copp in 1522.[25] It contains a conversation between Mensch (human being) and Geist, a spirit from heaven who is observing human activities in imperial Germany. Asked who has attracted his notice, the spirit lists, among others, Luther, Hutten, and Johannes Lang, the reformer of Erfurt. Mensch remarks: "You have named the most learned men of our time in this realm, but has Erasmus not been recommended to you?" "Yes," replies the Geist, "he has been recommended to me as well, but less highly." He admits, however, that Erasmus is fighting the good fight against the theologians of Louvain and Cologne. "Those two universities and their sophists cannot defeat the spirit of Erasmus, not if

they wrangle for three days, and if Thomas and Scotus are ever so acute." It is not clear what role Copp assigns to Erasmus here. By placing him in the company of Luther, Lang, and the humanist firebrand Hutten, Copp seems to position Erasmus with one foot in each camp. Ambivalence also characterizes the publisher's preface to a collection of Luther's writings (Wittenberg, 1520). He plays the usual game of name-dropping, in this case linking Luther with Lefèvre, "the pillar of erudition and integrity." No rationale is given for the link, except that both were attacked by the theologians of Paris who "try to condemn as heretics good men who are unwilling to join in their nonsense." Their efforts were in vain, however, because "learning is on the rise everywhere, and the world is coming to its senses, and the laity is not as ignorant as it used to be."[26] The party lines between humanists and reformers are blurred also in the *Confutatio sophistices et quaestionum curiosarum* (Confutation of Sophistry and of Curious Questions) of Otto Brunfels, a Carthusian soon to leave his monastery to become a schoolmaster in reformed Strasbourg. The book, a collection of prooftexts, furnished readers with arguments against the "sophists," that is, scholastic theologians. In explaining his purpose, Brunfels does not distinguish between reformers and humanists, but lists them indiscriminately as adversaries of traditional scholastic theology. His book, he hopes, will be used "to confound the sophists, who disdain Erasmus, Melanchthon, Martin Dorp [a Louvain theologian with humanist aspirations], Martin Luther, and Reuchlin."[27]

The writers cited so far seem ambivalent or confused about party lines and tend to combine cultural with religious concerns. Others employ a common label for the motley crew of names, fitting them into one of the two categories. Among the writers who identify the group as martyrs to the humanistic cause is Claude Dieudonne. Writing to Agrippa of Nettesheim in 1521, he links Erasmus with Luther, Reuchlin, and Lefèvre. When he calls their enemies "persecutors of *bonae literae*, good literature," he turns Luther into a representative of *bonae literae*.[28] Similarly, a letter from the Literary Society of Selestat, which forms the preface to an edition of Prudentius, connects Erasmus with Luther, referring to both as leaders of *studia meliora*.[29] The most striking evocation of the humanist connection is found in Luther's own works. In his *Resolutions of the Disputations Concerning the Efficacy of Indulgences* (1518) he complained that the inquisitors were so zealous that they made heretics of the most pious Christians. "For what else do the cases of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Lorenzo Valla, Petrus Ravenna, Johannes Vesalius, and most recently, Johann Reuchlin and Jacques Lefèvre show? Contrary to their own intentions, their well-meaning words were turned into evil." Readers would no doubt have identified as humanists the men named by Luther. He makes the same connection between his own experience and that of earlier humanists in the *Response to the Doctrinal Condemnation of the Louvain and Cologne Theologians* of 1520. There he again draws a time line, placing himself at the end of a list that includes the names of Pico della Mirandola, Valla, Reuchlin, and Erasmus. Pico was condemned by the *magistri nostri*, he writes; so was Valla, "that last remaining spark of the primitive church or a new kindling." Next, the *magistri* tangled with Reuchlin, but they ended up making fools of themselves and were still smarting from the embarrassment. "Now they are trying to recover their reputation with this new Lutheran drama." Did he need to mention other examples, such as the experiences of Lefèvre and Erasmus? "Was

there ever a man of outstanding talent and learning, who did not immediately become the target of their blustering nonsense?"[30]

In these groupings "humanism" appears to be the common denominator; in others "Reformation" is made out as the unifying element. A popular broadsheet produced by Hans Füssli in 1521 and entitled *Die Göttliche Mühle* (The Divine Mill) depicted Erasmus and Luther collaborating on the task of church reform, one grinding wheat, the other baking bread. The text explains that "the excellent Erasmus of Rotterdam, a scholar of great renown, has opened a safe pathway to the Sacred Scriptures."[31] Similarly, Johann Eigerlin, an official of the Bishop of Basel, wrote in 1519 that the "great Erasmus, by far the most learned man, put all his efforts into reviving true theology."[32] The same emphasis characterizes a dialogue written by the apothecary Ulrich Bossler in 1521 entitled *Gesprech des apostolicums, angelica, und anderer spezerei der apoteken* (Conversation between apostolicum, angelica, and other apothecary herbs). In the dialogue, "apostolicum" represents the Catholic and "angelica" the Lutheran point of view. "Angelica" accuses the Catholic Church of systemic harassment of learned men: "As soon as you have a devout, righteous, sound, and learned sheep . . . you turn it out, ban it, chase it away, or burn it, for example . . . Johannes Reuchlin, Doctor Martin Luther, Doctor Karlstadt, the knight Ulrich Hutten, and Doctor Erasmus Rotterdam."[33] Here Reuchlin and Erasmus, previously seen as shining examples of humanistic learning, are placed at the side of the reformers Luther and Karlstadt, sharing their luster as theologians.[34] Another Reformation pamphlet, Johann Eberlin's *First Confederate* (1521), clearly connects Reuchlin and Erasmus with the Reformation, depicting them as forerunners of Luther. Pleading with the Emperor, the First Confederate argues that "the world-renowned Johann Reuchlin is the source of everything beneficial to Germany. He was the first to uncover the buried wells of Christendom. . . . Next came Erasmus of Rotterdam, our great blessing." Luther completed their work, Eberlin says.[35]

The links thus established, between an older generation of humanists and a younger generation of reformers, entered the collective consciousness. The recurring catchphrase "putting one's sickle into another's crop" that had served the theological party and the grouping of names found in humanistic correspondence produced the same effect: the creation of a historical construct linking humanism with the Reformation.

Geographical Patterns: The Leipzig-Wittenberg Axis

The conceptual links provided in the writings of humanists and theologians were reinforced by the institutional affiliations of the protagonists, that is to say, by the geography of the debate. What, for example, were the mental associations produced by the place name "Wittenberg"? In the 1520s the town was synonymous with the Lutheran reformation. An advertising brochure of 1508, however, depicts Wittenberg as a vibrant center of humanistic learning. Commissioned by Polich of Mellerstadt, then rector of the university, and written by Andreas Meinhard, the pamphlet provides a gushing account of the wonders of the ducal palace and the luster of the newly founded university.[36] It is written in the form of a dialogue between two stu-

dents: Reinhard, who is on his way to enroll at the old-fashioned "pseudo-university" of Cologne;[37] and Meinhard, who is a student at the University of Wittenberg, here portrayed as an institution where students "apply themselves to the noble Roman tongue, that treasure house of empires." The faculty is constituted of brilliant scholars "comparable to the men of antiquity, well equipped with knowledge, and principally interested in exploring Latin sources. They are most skilled and eloquent teachers of the Roman speech, elegant poets crowned with the laurel." Similar paragons were teaching in other faculties. Meinhard, turning tourist guide, eventually succeeds in persuading Reinhard to abandon his plan of enrolling at Cologne and to remain in Wittenberg. The advertising campaign that presents Wittenberg as a progressive institution offering a humanistic curriculum may have helped to promote the idea that humanism and the Reformation were linked. For readers, to whom Luther, in 1517, was known only as a professor at Wittenberg, the marketing of his university as a center of humanism may have provided a cultural context in which to situate him.

The image of the University of Wittenberg was also defined by its competition with Leipzig, which had earlier seen confrontations between theologians and humanists. Polich of Mellerstadt had moved from Leipzig to Wittenberg, gladly departing the scene of a controversy that pitted him against the theologian Conrad Wimpina.[38] Their polemic had centered on the respective merits of theology and poetry. Wimpina composed a pamphlet, whose title spelled out his purpose: *To Justify and Defend Sacred Theology Against Men Who Try to Make Out Poetry as the Source, First Beginning, and Patron of Theology*. It is not without significance for the crossover from humanism to the Reformation that Wimpina proposed holding a debate of the issues before the inquisitor general. He felt that Polich's remarks on the subject had been impertinent and smacking of blasphemy. The dispute thus concerned not only the university but also the church, a combination that set the stage for the subsequent confusion of causes.[39] The conflict tapered off in 1503, but flared up again a few years later, when the poet Hermann Buschius departed from Leipzig after an unpleasant confrontation with the senate of the university. His successor, Aesticampianus, was expelled in 1511, as has been mentioned. Both men had connections with Wittenberg. Hermann Buschius had come to Leipzig after a visit at Wittenberg, where he had given the public address inaugurating lectures at the university. Aesticampianus eventually ended up in Wittenberg after being expelled from Leipzig. Andreas Meinhard, the author of the advertising brochure, was another ex-Leipziger. He had transferred to Wittenberg because he felt that his career was being stunted at his old institution. In the meantime Wimpina had moved from Leipzig to the University of Frankfurt/Oder, from where he polemicized against Luther.[40] No doubt, this activity revived memories of his earlier entanglement with Polich at Leipzig. The movement of disgruntled or frustrated scholars from Leipzig to Wittenberg and the public commentary it engendered no doubt helped to shape perceptions of the institutional culture of the two universities. The Leipzig Disputation of 1519 between Luther, Karlstadt, and Eck polarized the images, casting Wittenberg as a haven for reformers and Leipzig as traditional and sympathetic to Catholic apologists.

In the wake of the Disputation faculty members at the two institutions became

entangled in a polemic that mushroomed into a pamphlet war involving no fewer than ten apologiae and antapologiae. The polemic may be regarded as the missing link in the shift of the debate from the academic to the doctrinal sphere, or to put it another way, a first step in the confessionalization of the humanist-scholastic debate. The first tracts published on each side appear to be no more than a continuation of the long-standing controversy between humanists and theologians over curriculum and hierarchy of disciplines. We find the familiar preoccupation with language and the obligatory snide remarks about the idiomatic faux pas of scholastic writers, features characteristic of the humanist-scholastic debate. As the polemic continues, however, the emphasis shifts and Luther's teachings rather than the merit of humanistic studies become the center of the dispute.[41]

The polemic was set in motion by a report on the debate addressed to Konrad of Thüngen, Bishop of Würzburg, by one Johannes Rubius Longipollus.[42] A graduate of the University of Wittenberg, he moved on to Leipzig to study theology. His report says little about the content of the debate, but a great deal about the style of the protagonists. It is filled with value judgments and frequently descends into bathos. Rubius characterizes Luther and Karlstadt as vexatious and abusive speakers who failed to cite pertinent scholastic sources and "presumptuously attempted to interpret Holy Writ by their own native wit, not at all wisely and in the scholastic fashion." Indeed, they had dared to "sink their dog-like and viperine fangs" into scholastic exegetes. Eck, however, had outdone the mythological Hercules, taking on two opponents and defeating them both. He produced "herculean and samsonite arguments," and his voice was like thunder and lightning.[43] He terrified his opponents and impressed the audience with his prodigious memory, "a gift from high Olympus." Karlstadt, by contrast, had to rely on his notes and books. Here Rubius gleefully relates the apocryphal story of a university professor who entered the lecture hall "in great spirits and carrying his head high, placing more weight and trust in his notes than in a vivid memory. But someone had secretly taken away the piece of paper on which his arguments were set down, and when it was his turn to debate, he looked left and right, searching up and down for his notes. He cast around for arguments to advance but found none." And so he shuffled out of the lecture hall, humiliated. Karlstadt had found himself in the same predicament after Eck had complained that his opponent was delivering a lecture rather than engaging in a disputation. The judges agreed with him, and Karlstadt was obliged to defer the debate to the next day in order to prepare himself for the engagement.[44] Rubius is as sparing in his praise of Luther as he is fulsome in his praise of Eck. He grudgingly admits "that [Luther] is learned and endowed with great scholarly knowledge, but he is sadly misguided . . . in his irreverent treatment of the scholastic doctors."[45]

Rubius goes on to relate a personal encounter he had with students from Wittenberg who had come to Leipzig to witness the debate. It is significant that he typecasts the Wittenbergers as humanists who vilify Aristotle as a "corruptor of youth." Rubius, as defender of the traditional scholastic curriculum, challenges them to a debate and discovers that they know nothing about Aristotle. "Tell me, I said, what studies do you waste your parents' money on? Under what masters have you studied? To whom are you pledged—is it the standards of Minerva and Apollo? They said they were champions of polite letters." Rubius replied scornfully that the true poet

must be a philosopher as well. "They did not realize that the poet is a man made up and composed of all kinds of knowledge, and thus these men in my opinion were seeking and embracing exalted and difficult authors without a solid foundation." If that was the standard of learning at Wittenberg, Rubius said, it was not surprising that Luther and Karlstadt "countered Eck's subtle and perfect objections, his lightning bolts, with frigid, jejune, and insignificant arguments."[46]

While Rubius makes clear where his sympathies lie, another Leipzig scholar, the Hebraist Johannes Cellarius, promised Wolfgang Capito, his correspondent in Basel, a fair and unbiased report of the debate.[47] Accordingly, he presented the arguments made on each side without passing judgment on them. He expressed admiration for Eck's memory and ability to speak freely, for his "ingenuity, his Demosthenic power, so to speak, his sustained ability to proffer and rebut arguments in the smoothest manner." He also praised Luther's learned exposition of scriptural texts and noted the forbearance he had shown, especially in his discussion of indulgences, in which he "used milder terms than he had used elsewhere in writing."[48] Cellarius' report concludes with another protestation of his impartiality and veracity: "No doubt men will not be lacking to whom victory is everything and who will build up every little detail to give the appearance that their side has won, even at the cost of the truth. You can rely on my words, for these are the facts and the order in which the theological disputation at Leipzig proceeded. I attest that I have written this neither in favour nor out of hatred for anyone's party."[49]

Neither Rubius' partisan report nor Cellarius' measured account pleased Luther's followers. Johannes Hessius Montanus (Eisenmann), then a fledgling jurist at Wittenberg, and soon to make a reputation for himself at the University of Marburg, responded by composing a mock encomium on Rubius, in which he inserted caustic remarks and asides directed against Cellarius.[50] Eisenmann's pamphlet, like the two reports attacked by him, incorporates themes familiar from the humanist-scholastic debate. He begins with jeers for the "sophists" of Leipzig. "You [Rubius] would have been better off spouting this nonsense in your own circle rather than writing against our school, for you are such a true offspring of sophists that we would have no scruples pitting a child against you. There is no boy who could not successfully rebut all of your sophistical expositions." Rubius closely resembled his sophistic mentors in his boorishness and lack of common sense. He served as the mouthpiece of the sophists, who were trying "to insult the humanities, because they could not halt their progress." Rubius, however, had the last laugh in the exchange, when he pointed out that he held a degree from the University of Wittenberg. If he was as boorish as Eisenmann had made him out, it was Wittenberg's fault, he said, "for taking my money without giving me knowledge or learning in exchange."[51]

In Eisenmann's diatribe a role was reserved also for Cellarius, who displayed great arrogance but was "lighter than a pumice stone." He had as much learning "as a mosquito has fat." He undertook to teach Hebrew at Leipzig, "although he had not learned Latin yet."[52] Both Cellarius' and Rubius' reports were riddled with solecisms, Eisenmann says. It is significant that he portrays the "sophists" of Leipzig as hostile to both humanists and reformers. "It is their goal to impede the progress of letters. They have roused the Eckian monster, not to advance the search for the truth, but tenaciously to defend the dreams they have absorbed from their tender

years. This can only be harmful to the Christian religion."[53] Eisenmann then returns to Cellarius, disputing the fairness of his account. He is stung by Cellarius' compliments for Eck's "Demosthenic" eloquence and accuses him of "corrupting everything, tearing it apart, and badly twisting it to suit his own party." Exaggerating Cellarius' praise for Eck, which is modest by the standards of the time, Eisenmann claims that Cellarius has adorned the Catholic apologist with "more qualities than the gods in Hesiod's account gave to mortals in that harmful Pandora's box." In a parting shot, he mocks Cellarius' admiration for Eck's rhetorical flourishes—a case of "the cabbage fitting the lips!"[54]

The polemic continued with Cellarius protesting that he had been misrepresented, and Eisenmann defending his criticism. The dispute was resolved at last, when Cellarius pronounced himself unequivocally in favor of Luther and published a brief statement of support, entitled *Johannes Cellarius' Verdict on Martin Luther* (1520).[55] The purpose of the statement was to counter the suspicions raised by his adversary, Cellarius said. He wished to clarify his position. He believed "that Martin loves the gospel truth more than do all his adversaries together. And his writings, which represent the truth, are so pleasing to me (those at any rate which I have read, for I am distracted by many and diverse tasks) that no pope, no cardinal, no monk however proud will turn me away from them." Cellarius' ringing endorsement moves the controversy, which began in the style of a humanist-scholastic confontation, firmly into the realm of the Reformation debate.

Linking Humanism with the Reformation: Confusion or Conspiracy?

The evidence cited so far shows that there was confusion about party platforms and affiliations. Erasmus was among the first to see in the association of humanism with the Reformation a risk to the progress of humanistic studies and suggested that the confusion was artificially created. He made a concerted effort to disentangle the two movements. "What have the humanities in common with the business of faith?" he asked bluntly.[56] In his opinion, there was no good reason for humanists to engage themselves on Luther's behalf. "After all," he noted, "Luther is not so far advanced in the knowledge of the tongues or of elegant scholarship to provide supporters of such studies with any interest in his case." He was, moreover, alarmed to find his own words reinterpreted to fit the paradigms of the Reformation and began to regret his unguarded language. His earlier lack of discretion threatened to expose him to misrepresentation. "If only I could undo everything and start anew," he exclaimed in 1530, but "the only option now is to correct or tone down many things I have written."[57] In Erasmus' opinion the misconceptions about the two movements had not arisen spontaneously but were introduced purposely by reactionary theologians. When Luther appeared on the stage, "they maliciously tried to mix up [humanism] with the Lutheran business, so that they could destroy both with one blow."

Erasmus' conspiracy theory deserves further investigation. It is a fact that a striking number of people linked Luther's name with the names of biblical humanists. We have seen that Erasmus, Reuchlin, Lefèvre, and Luther were regularly grouped

together, suggesting a common front and leading to a blurring of party lines. The confusion was at its height in the years leading up to the Diet of Worms. In the 1520s, however, a process of clarification began. In the Reformation camp Melanchthon affords a good example of this process. His statements document both the initial confusion and later correction. In 1519, Melanchthon criticizes scholastic theologians for their hostility to Erasmus, creating the familiar pattern by connecting his case with that of Reuchlin and Luther. "The same party could not suffer Reuchlin, . . . and cannot bear Martin Luther because he counsels the right thing."[58] In his preface to Luther's *Operationes in Psalmos* (1519) he again connected the three men's names. In the same year he wrote to Wolfgang Capito, speaking of his efforts to revive Christian learning, and a third time linked Erasmus with Luther and other reformers: "The great Erasmus cast the die for us . . . . you and Oecolampadius come next. And I believe, Martin and Karlstadt will achieve something. I follow them at a great distance." In a postscript added to Luther's commentary on Galatians, he wrote in the same vein: "Martin consistently pursues this one goal: to make you cast away foolish stuff and treat Holy Scripture in a pure fashion; and he is our foremost champion, second only to Erasmus."[59] Within a few years, however, Melanchthon had sorted out the differences. His famous "verdict" on Erasmus and Luther, a comment he may have made during a course of lectures in 1522, is frequently cited. Luther, he reportedly said, was committed to "true, evangelical, Christian preaching," whereas Erasmus merely taught "good manners and civility."[60] In other words, Luther was a reformer, Erasmus merely a humanist. Melanchthon's judgment was soon echoed by others, for example Albert Burer, who wrote to Beatus Rhenanus from Wittenberg: "They say that Erasmus does not have the spirit that Luther has. . . . In his *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, they say, he has imitated Plato more than Christ." Erasmus Alber was another one who shared Melanchthon's sentiments. Erasmus was eloquent, he said, but Luther was a second Saint Paul.[61]

We can see a similar progression of thought in the writings of other leading reformers, for example, Bucer and Zwingli. Earlier, mistaken notions about the relationship between Erasmus and Luther were corrected once their published exchange over free will had made clear beyond a doubt the differences in their respective doctrinal positions. In 1518 Bucer had written about Martin Luther: "He agrees in everything with Erasmus, with the only difference that what Erasmus merely hints at, Luther teaches openly and freely."[62] Bucer continued to write enthusiastically about the humanist, and in 1520 listed both him and Luther among the champions of New Learning.[63] Over the next year he referred to Erasmus and Luther as the men on whom he placed his principal hope and whom he saw as fellow sufferers and victims of a smear campaign by Italian theologians. He went as far as claiming that Erasmus had been in some respects more successful than Luther in promoting the Reformation message. What he said about confession in response to his Louvain critic, Edward Lee, was "more effective in undermining the authority of secret confession than any book of Luther's has been so far."[64] The turning point for Bucer came with the publication of Erasmus' polemic against Luther in 1524. He recognized that Erasmus was not one of the evangelicals. "He preferred the savor of his own opinion to that of Scripture." It was true that Erasmus had promoted biblical studies, but this promotion should be attributed to God's divine plan rather than hu-

man efforts: "We admit that through him [Erasmus] we began to recognize the truth. But so what? Why not acknowledge Christ as the source of it?"[65] The invective Erasmus directed against Bucer and the Strasbourg reformers in 1530 put an end, finally, to the notion that the humanist was in sympathy with the goals of the Reformation.

Zwingli, like Bucer, had originally suggested that Luther and Erasmus appealed to the same group: "Luther is approved by all scholars in Zurich, and as far as the *Ratio* of Erasmus is concerned, I can't remember a book that yields such great benefit in so small a compass." He once credited Erasmus with inspiring the view that Christ was the only mediator between God and human beings. By 1522 he acknowledged the differences in their respective positions, although in discreet terms: "If Erasmus has erred in anything, he erred in treating the Romanists too gently. He preferred, like a kind of Eli, to admonish them in a fatherly manner, instead of making Elias his model and reproving them severely." Commenting on Erasmus' *Hyperaspistes* in 1526, he adopted a sharper tone, calling it a "disorganized book."[66] An enmity developed between Zwingli and Erasmus because, as Zwingli explained, he "defended Luther against him with all [his] strength and used rather harsh terms in a long letter to him." In 1526 Erasmus published the colloquy "A Journey for Religion's Sake," which ridicules Zwingli's teaching on the veneration of saints. He added an apologetic appendix to the edition, pointing to the colloquy as proof of his rejection of the reformer's ideas.[67] However, both Zwingli and Bucer continued to refer to Erasmus' scholarship with deference. He was a man of "incomparable learning," regardless of his doctrinal views.[68]

The examples of Melanchthon, Bucer, and Zwingli show a gradual adjustment as the distinct nature of the two movements emerged. The comments of the printer Ulrich Hugwald, who was sympathetic to the Reformation, suggest that an observant individual could not fail to notice the divergence of paths. Anyone who was still under the impression "that Luther or any other evangelical has anything to do with that Hercules [Erasmus], whom people once raised up to heaven for his achievements," was ignorant and had no understanding of the true nature of religion, he said.[69] When Hugwald made this comment in 1522, the difference between the currents represented by Erasmus and Luther, respectively, had obviously begun to register in the minds of those who had earlier held mistaken notions about them. The old misrepresentations continued to circulate, however. The ongoing dissemination of the message that humanism and the Reformation were linked persuaded Erasmus and others that the confusion was encouraged in certain quarters and artificially prolonged. The reformers, Erasmus alleged, "captivated the minds of the young people with their professed interest in languages and literature.[70] Was it possible that some people in the reformed camp were no longer deceived about the distinct nature of the two movements but did not consider it prudent to say so because they were anxious to preserve a common front against scholastic theologians? Could it be that Catholic theologians, who were part of the university establishment, could very well distinguish humanists from reformers but found it convenient to rid themselves of their humanist critics and competitors by labeling them reformers and heretics? And did both reformers and defenders of the old faith practice dissimulation to avoid driv-

ing the uncommitted into the enemy's camp? Accusations of this kind were certainly traded among the polemicists.

The divergence between Luther's public and private comments on Erasmus illustrates the extent to which strategy shaped his statements. In 1520 Luther had deliberately linked his own name with those of the famous Italian humanists Pico della Mirandola and Valla, as well as with contemporary humanists like Reuchlin and Erasmus. Over the following years he continued to court their favor, although he distinguished his own agenda from that of the biblical humanists as early as 1516. At that time he wrote to Spalatin, expressing the hope that Erasmus would use his authority to support reform, but also voicing fears that he might promote only a reform of secular learning. He was ambivalent also about Lefèvre, for although he was otherwise "a devout and sincere man, he lacked that understanding in interpreting Scripture which was fully present in his life." Luther continues, "[Y]ou may think I am very bold to criticize with Aristarchus' rod two great men, but you will understand that I do it in the interest of theology and the salvation of my brothers."[71] In 1523 he wrote to Oecolampadius that Erasmus' principal talent lay in the field of humanism and that he could make no further contribution to the cause of the Reformation. He had "done what he was ordained to do. He introduced the study of languages and called us away from sacrilegious studies." He repeated these sentiments in a letter to Erasmus himself. He did not deny his merits as a humanist, he said. "That learning flourishes through you and wins the day, thus opening the way to the genuine study of the Bible, is a thing the whole world simply cannot deny, nor that there is a great and special gift of God in you for which we must all give thanks." But he also told him that he had reached his limits and counseled him: "If you cannot or dare not be assertive in our cause, leave it alone and keep to your own business." Although Luther was clearly aware of their distinct interests, he thought it best not to dwell on them in public. Recommending this strategy to Oecolampadius, he wrote: "I feel Erasmus' barbs occasionally, but since he pretends in public not to be my enemy, I in turn pretend that I do not understand his clever words."[72]

Oecolampadius, the reformer of Basel, approved of Luther's approach, but for his own reasons. He had, in 1516, collaborated with Erasmus on the New Testament edition and had frequently been hailed by him as his "Pylades," his trusted friend and helper. For a while he assumed that Erasmus was on Luther's side and, when the two men engaged in a polemic in 1524, accused Erasmus of being a turncoat. By 1526 Oecolampadius himself was at odds with Erasmus over the Eucharistic question and began to speak of him with some bitterness. Like other reformers, he was prepared to respect Erasmus for his scholarship: "While he kept to his [humanistic] vocation, he was quite rightly regarded a great man; for he restored to its pristine purity what had been corrupted over many centuries on account of our ignorance of languages. But now that he has joined the papist troops he ventures into a field that exceeds his capacity." In the end, Oecolampadius opted for peace, but unlike Luther, who wanted a truce for strategic reasons, Oecolampadius seems to have been motivated by nostalgic sentiments. He was willing to make concessions to Erasmus for the sake of their former friendship and "the old age of a man who is rather morose and sharp-tongued."[73]

Hutten was another one who did not labor under the mistaken notion that Erasmus' and Luther's ideas were interchangeable. He acknowledged the prevailing confusion. The general perception was that Erasmus had inspired Luther, he wrote. "You were the fountain-head of the present troubles, you showed us the way (they think), you taught us, . . . you are the man on whom the rest of us depend. Of course this is not true." Hutten was aware that the reformers did not depend on Erasmus, but he pleaded with Erasmus not to stand in Luther's way because, if the Reformation succeeded, "liberal studies too will flourish and the humanities will be held in honor." If Erasmus was afraid of being burdened with the unpopularity of the reformers, Hutten continued, he should at least keep the peace: "Don't make light of the matter, better pass it over in complete silence."[74] He wrote to Reuchlin with a similar message in 1521, suggesting that it was better to keep any misgivings under wraps. Hutten intimated that Reuchlin was publicly criticizing Luther to save his own skin. In Hutten's opinion, "it would have been sufficient to write in your defense that you never had any dealings with Luther . . . but you add that you have always disapproved of his cause and were very indignant when you saw your name in his writings and even tried to draw away people who adhered to our cause." He appealed first of all to Reuchlin's sense of honor and loyalty, but he also mentioned the strategic point of his advice, asking him to keep silent for the sake of "the common cause of letters." A letter from Glareanus to Zwingli at the end of 1522 reflects the same concern for keeping a united front: "I greatly fear a duel between Luther and Erasmus. If it comes to pass, dear gods, what a burden it will be for the study of literature!"[75] Conversely, Melanchthon sought to avoid conflicts that harmed the evangelical cause. He conceded that "Erasmus' [writings] hurt our cause somewhat, nevertheless it would have been better to ignore them." Accordingly he practiced restraint in his comments on the polemic between Luther and Erasmus over free will, which erupted in 1524. Although Erasmus voiced the suspicion that Melanchthon had collaborated with Luther, Melanchthon refused to be goaded into a sharp rebuttal. "I shrink to whisper about this injury," he wrote to Jerome Baumgartner, adding that he feared the results of an all-out war between Erasmus and the Lutherans.[76]

Luther's and Hutten's remarks suggest that the reformers pursued an agenda when they leveled the differences between the diverse and increasingly conflicting aims of the two movements. It was an agenda based on a perceived common advantage. A more sinister aim was pursued by reactionary Catholic theologians, according to Erasmus and others in his circle. In their opinion, the theologians linked humanism with the Reformation movement in order to mark it with the stigma of heterodoxy and destroy both parties in the process. They used humanism as a scapegoat, claiming that it had given impetus to the schismatics, Erasmus said. His theory was not entirely new; it was an extension of the earlier claim that scholastic theologians were systematically persecuting the champions of the New Learning.[77] Erasmus may, however, have been the first to add a new dimension to the conspiracy theory by claiming that the theologians were plotting to ruin the humanists *together with* the reformers. Already in his first letter to Luther he stated that the theologians had now found an "opening to suppress . . . humane studies." In a contemporary letter to Albrecht of Brandenburg, he commented: "Those people . . . have long re-

sented the new blossoming of the humanities and the ancient tongues, and the revival of the authors of Antiquity." They dreaded the loss of power and authority at the universities that would follow the humanists' rise to prominence. "When Luther's books appeared, as though this gave them a handle, they began to tie [them] up with the study of the ancient tongues and the humanities."[78] Similarly, he told Cardinal Campeggi that there was a "conspiracy of fanatics." When Luther's writings appeared, "their spirits rose at once: here was a weapon put in their hands, with which they could finish off language studies and the humanities." They purposely confused matters, "including under one label things by nature quite distinct."[79]

Erasmus' views soon found suppport. The Dominican Johann Faber declared that the origin of the Lutheran tumult "was hatred of good literature, which they now maliciously tried to mix up with the Lutheran business, so that they could destroy both with one strike."[80] The conspiracy theory was advanced also by the reformers. Spalatin wrote "that those theologists at Cologne are all bitter enemies of liberal studies; that is why they are broadcasting the [papal] verdict against Reuchlin and the bull against Martin [Luther]." Melanchthon also saw a conspiracy behind the resistance to the *studia humaniora*: "The patrons of scholastic literature will be pleased to have found a handle to slander (Erasmus) the prince of good letters," he wrote in reference to Edward Lee's attack on Erasmus' New Testament edition.[81] The conspiracy theory had international dimensions moreover. There are similar assumptions behind Guillaume Farel's welcome of King Francis' return to Paris in 1526. He was, according to Farel, "a god out of the machine, who will repress certain madmen who conspire to bring about the destruction of good letters and evangelical authority."[82] Vadianus' brother, Melchior, wrote from Rome in 1520 to report on the same tendency there. Some people believed "that nothing could be more beneficial to the faith and the Roman church than if Erasmus and all the other poets and orators were burned." According to this opinion, the humanists were promoting the heterodox views of the reformers, "hiding poison under honey."[83]

Catholic controversialists certainly contributed to the muddling of the issue. The proverb "Erasmus laid the egg, and Luther hatched it" seems to have originated in Franciscan circles.[84] The papal legate, Girolamo Aleandro, agreed with the message conveyed by this dictum. He, too, saw in Erasmus "the director of the Lutheran tragedy" and, more generally, depicted the humanists as supporters of Luther. Among the various champions of the Lutheran cause, he said, "the captious crowd of grammarians and wretched poets" was the most dangerous. "These people believe they are true scholars and experts in Greek only if they declare that their views differ from the common teaching of the Church." He specifically criticized the disciples of Reuchlin and Erasmus.[85] Humanists took note of Aleandro's hostility. Wolfgang Capito, then in the service of the Archbishop of Mainz, wondered whether the allegations were true that Aleandro was "determined to bring ruin to the humanities, beginnning with Luther and Reuchlin and coming, by degrees, to Erasmus and the rest of the German champions of the humanities."[86] The Catholic apologist Johann Cochlaeus likewise saw humanists in league with reformers and directed his attacks at both. In 1521 he lumped together "poets, Greeklings, and any faithless and impious schismatics and apostates."[87] Two years later, he spoke of Luther marshaling his forces, "his frivolous poets and half-educated men of letters."[88] He reiterated this the-

ory in his *Commentaries on the Deeds and Writings of Martin Luther*: "Luther drew into his camp all the highly educated young people, who were committed to the study of rhetoric and languages, and whose minds had been schooled by the acute and polished works of Erasmus of Rotterdam."[89] The Louvain theologian Francis Titelmans similarly claimed that humanism had spawned the Reformation. The *studia humaniora* were at the bottom of the new "heresies." Titelmans' *Epistola Apologetica* (1530) contains an invective against humanistic studies: "We see hardly anyone become a better man on account of these studies, although some become more adept at making speeches about virtue. We know that most of them have become worse men, indeed prone to dissension, insults, quarrels, disobedience, mumblings, and rebellion against the prelates of the Church." Who were the authors of the religious tumult "if not those men, who have corrupt minds but smooth tongues"? Who, for example, was the leader of the Basel reformation—Oecolampadius, whom Erasmus once praised for his "piety and his knowledge of the three languages. . . . is he not the man under whose guidance everything in Basel is now turned upside down in the worst fashion?" Hutten and Melanchthon likewise served as examples of the evil fruit of humanistic studies: "All those whom [Erasmus] praised as the foremost disciples of this kind of learning have become leaders and captains of heretics."[90] The view that humanism and the Reformation went hand in hand was perpetuated into the next decade. In 1545 Georg Riecker, canon at Worms, still insisted on a link between the two movements. He called the Reformation "a many-headed beast," counting among its adherents "those seditious little grammarians."[91] Erasmus remained the standard example cited in support of the theory that humanism had provided the underpinning for the Reformation. It was a claim that survived into the second half of the sixteenth century. At the Council of Trent, the Franciscan Dionisio Zannettini brought out the old chestnut "Either Erasmus lutheranizes or Luther erasmianizes;" and Giovanni Facchinetti (later Pope Innocent IX) wanted to see schoolmasters regulated because of "the contagious nature of the heresy born of these humanists and schoolmasters."[92]

The evidence cited suggests that there was initially widespread confusion over the relationship between humanism and the Reformation. A clearer picture began to emerge in the 1520s when the schismatic nature of Luther's teaching became apparent, but the two movements continued to be linked in polemical contexts and the idea of an affiliation was perpetuated by interested parties for ideological reasons. It appears that a particular conjunction of circumstances gave rise to the original misconception. The terminological latitude of the words "humanist" and "theologian" created linguistic conditions favorable to such a confusion. There was, moreover, an overlap in the issues that engaged humanists and reformers. Both groups were challenging the status quo and confronting the same professional group: scholastic theologians. Language studies and textual criticism, typical humanistic preoccupations, were embraced by the reformers in an effort to give their doctrinal positions a philological basis.[93] The hostility of the scholastic doctors against the New Learning thus became a concern common to both groups. The curricular interest of the humanists, their misgivings about the central place of logic and the neglect of language and style, coincided in some respects with the reformers' complaints about the preeminence of Aristotelian over scriptural studies, the sterility of theological dispu-

tations, and the neglect of preaching. When reformers cited scriptural and patristic texts in preference to the traditional medieval authorities, their arguments appeared to echo the humanistic call *Ad fontes*. The chronological proximity of the polemics involving Reuchlin, Lefèvre, Erasmus, and Luther, and the geography of the debate also suggested an internal connection between disparate cases. Thus the distinction between the parties became blurred.

Although it soon transpired that the similarities were superficial or coincidental and that humanists and reformers were not driven by the same considerations, the perception that the two currents were closely related lingered or was artificially maintained. Humanism became a shibboleth in the propaganda war between reformers and Catholic apologists. Glib catchphrases, indiscriminate name-dropping, and shallow historicizing were the preferred weapons in what turned into a dirty war. Erasmus pointed an accusing finger at reactionary theologians. He saw them as conspirators trying to ruin humanists and reformers by tarring them with the same brush. However, attempts to level the differences between the two parties were not confined to the Catholic camp. Even after the fissures widened in the supposedly common platform, some reformers continued to smooth over the differences in their public statements. They considered it politic to present a united front to the enemy. Conversely, Catholic theologians, who had felt the sting of humanistic satire, found it convenient to identify humanism with the "heretical" reform movement. The idea that humanists were either forerunners of or comrades-in-arms with the reformers was kept alive in both Protestant and Catholic historiography until the middle of the century. In this manner humanism became an issue in the Reformation debate and its champions implicated in questions that were peripheral to the primary mission of the movement, which was cultural. This was the beginning of the confessionalization of humanism. The ideas of the reformers, which already enjoyed broad support, were made more attractive to young intellectuals by their association with humanism, the movement that had shaped their cultural identity. Conversely, Catholic apologists had a solid following, but by casting humanists and reformers in the same mold, were able to capitalize on the aversion to the New Learning in scholastic circles. Thus the process of ordering thought along confessional loyalties rather than cultural preferences was set in motion.

Humanists and Reformers as Foes

Humanistic Studies and Confessional Formation

The 1520s brought about not only a clarification of the respective aims of humanists and reformers but also a remarkable reevaluation. "Wherever Lutheranism reigns, letters perish," Erasmus wrote in 1528. His complaint was echoed by Georg Witzel, a former Lutheran pastor, who stated in 1536: "Education is languishing among the Lutherans. There will be tears and lamentations over Luther, if only on account of the disruption of learning."[1] The perception that the reformers were not allies but foes of the New Learning gained currency beyond the borders of the Empire as well. The French humanist Guillaume Budé declared that "the more fervent the [religious] debate . . . the more unpopular the glorious restoration and revival of letters."[2] In England, Thomas More expressed similar thoughts. In his *Dialogue Concerning Heresies* (1529), he drew a portrait of the reformer as an enemy of learning. The Messenger, a Protestant in caricature, endorses the principle of *sola scriptura* to the exclusion not only of religious observances but also of the liberal arts and indeed of all learning: "I understood him to have given diligence to the Latin tongue. As for the other faculties he did not care. For he told me merrily that he thought logic was mere babbling, music of service to singers, arithmetic suitable for merchants, geometry for masons, astronomy good for no man, and as for philosophy, it was the vainest of all; . . . for man, he said, has no light but of holy Scripture." Reflecting on the motives for this aversion to learning, More speculated that it arose "partly out of sloth, people refusing the labour and the pain to be sustained by learning; partly because of pride, by which they could not endure the rebuttals that should sometimes fall to their lot in disquisitions. They covered and cloaked their [lack of learning] with the pretext of simplicity and good Christian devotion to the love of holy Scripture alone."[3]

How did it come to pass that a group closely identified with humanism a decade earlier was now perceived as boorish and inimical to learning? Statistics for the 1520s confirm that educational institutions were in trouble. There was a sharp decline in enrollment at universities throughout the Empire, from a high of about 2,300 students in 1515 to a low of 650 in the late 1520s.[4] Modern scholars point to a number of factors contributing to the plight of the universities, ranging from plague epidemics and social unrest at the local level to political rivalry and religious strife at the na-

tional level. The attendant financial hardship and lack of security upset the pattern of academic travel and enrollment. The schism of the church affected enrollment insofar as it led to uncertainty about career options. It blocked the traditional sources of stipends for clerics, who constituted a large proportion of graduating students. The confessional divisions had, moreover, a cocooning effect, since there was pressure (and sometimes legislation) to keep students at home in order to avoid doctrinal contamination at universities in regions controlled by rival confessions. The dip in numbers was, however, temporary and a recovery took place within twenty years. After an initial period of confusion and stagnation, religious settlements restored peace and order, and new schools and universities founded to satisfy ideological needs bolstered student numbers. But what connection, if any, did contemporaries see between matriculation figures and the Reformation? While hindsight and detachment allow us to take a balanced view of the conditions affecting education, writers in the sixteenth century tended to offer a radically simplified explanation in line with their personal ideology.

Criticism of Protestant Education: Erasmus and His Circle

Erasmus, who after 1521 turned into a vocal critic of the reformers, may have influenced the thinking of others in turn. Ulrich von Hutten had suggested to him that both reformers and humanists stood to gain from an alliance. He had urged Erasmus to support or at any rate not to disparage Luther, for he would deliver Germany from papal tyranny, and "then letters too will flourish and learning will be held in honour."[5] Erasmus reserved judgment on this optimistic scenario. He remained skeptical of claims that an alliance was mutually beneficial and eventually came to the opposite conclusion. The gains made by the humanists at the beginning of the century seemed lost in the upheaval of the Reformation. "I hate those evangelicals for many reasons," he wrote, "but especially because on account of them humanistic studies are neglected everywhere, grow insipid, lie prostrate, and perish."[6] After moving from Basel to Catholic Freiburg in 1529, Erasmus wrote contemptuously about the state of learning in the reformed city he had left behind. "They are proud of their academy. But where are the students? The evangelicals won't study; the others [Catholics] won't come unless they don't mind being regarded as heretics." He had inserted a similar aside into his dialogue *On the Correct Pronunciation of Greek* (1528), saying that well-qualified professors were unable to find students to attend their lectures. "Work-shy students have recently begun to thrive under the shelter of piety," he said,[7] suggesting that those who were unwilling to make the necessary effort piously declared that Christian simplicity prevented them from seeking knowledge. True knowledge, they claimed, came from God rather than from the study of letters. Erasmus' accusations were borne out by writers like Johann Eberlin, who declared that "it rarely does any good to consult books; they only give rise to errors" and insisted that "whatever any teacher has written about the Bible, a zealous reader of the Bible can learn for himself."[8]

Erasmus continued to express negative opinions about the educational standards of the reformers, notably in an open letter to the Strasbourg ministers (1530):

"So far I have heard of no one in your sect who has acquired a knowledge of letters." In the Lutheran camp, Melanchthon was the lone exception, he said. "[T]he majority of Luther's champions, however, know neither Greek nor Latin."[9] Even among those who had studied the biblical languages, Erasmus saw "no one who studied literature or cared to study it."[10] He faulted the reformers primarily for failing to provide a well-rounded education. Here he distinguished between studying languages to acquire philological skills and studying languages to appreciate literature. The former, which was indeed pursued by the reformers, did not make a man cultured, Erasmus insisted. Such studies did not constitute a humanistic education, as he understood it. "Language studies by themselves do not add up to erudition."[11] Erasmus also questioned the motives of the reformers. By narrowing the curriculum, he said, they were pandering to students who were unwilling to exert themselves sufficiently to acquire a well-rounded education.

Erasmus expressed these sentiments also in letters and conversations with friends, who in turn spread the message abroad. Hilarius Bertholf, for a while a member of Erasmus' household in Basel, wrote to Guillaume Farel in 1524, connecting the Reformation in Geneva with the decline of learning: "They say that you are the leader of those who attempt to destroy better literature and the humanities. After the light of the Gospel has put to flight Scotus and Tartaretus, would you want us to speak and preach like Scotus and Tartaretus? Do the Muses not attract you, even though Augustine recommended them to his Licentius, and St. Jerome so often used the testimony of the poets, and St. Paul, too? Are you not fond of chaste and pure Latinity?"[12]

The message was also spread by the poet laureate Henricus Glareanus, another associate of Erasmus in Basel. In a letter to Willibald Pirckheimer in Nürnberg Glareanus complained that the humanities were being shortchanged by the Basel reformers. He felt harassed by certain people "who wanted to see all letters perish," but was reluctant to name them, "for they are very pugnacious and utter threats on the strength of their new hypocrisy." In another letter he expressed similar apprehensions. There were people who aimed at the destruction of learning. They criticized the old scholastic theologians, calling them sophists, but

> they themselves are more foolish than all sophists . . . and clamour loudly that there is no need to study Greek and Latin, as long as we know Hebrew and German. . . . These people who want to destroy all literature are troublesome. . . . We who strive to speak Greek and Latin are slandered by these preachers in their sermons before the people. They say we teach paganism. It is truly unfortunate. The same loudmouths can also be found among the Swiss, who constantly thunder against learning before the unlearned people, so that it is almost considered praiseworthy among them to know nothing.

Erasmus, he told Pirckheimer, shared his opinion. He, too, was complaining that the attitude of the reformers had led to a decline in learning. In Basel, "there were almost more teachers than students. A storm is raging against the humanities, more savage than at the time when the sophists held sway."[13] Glareanus left his post as director of a residential school in Basel after the city turned Protestant and, following Erasmus' example, moved to Freiburg.

Another Basel friend who shared Erasmus' concerns about the decline of learning was the jurist Boniface Amerbach. Amerbach had become acquainted with Erasmus through his father's publishing firm and stayed in contact with the humanist during his years of study abroad. Their friendship remained close after Amerbach's return to Basel. The two men were in agreement about many aspects of the Reformation. Unlike Erasmus, however, Amerbach stayed in Basel through the years of religious unrest. In 1534 he was able to work out a compromise with the reformed pastors[14] and was appointed to a post at the university. He also acted as legal consultant to the city. In letters to friends, Amerbach frequently lamented the decline of the university and eventually took a hand in bringing about its revival. He, too, made a connection between the decline of learning and the rise of the evangelicals, but he differentiated between mainstream Lutherans and extremists. Luther, he said in 1523, "says that the humanities must be fostered; by contrast, [Karlstadt] and his supporters seem to have one goal in mind: to put aside learning and abolish language studies." A year later he wrote succinctly: "It is all over with learning, all over with the citizens, and the city, if Christ does not come to our assistance." A climate hostile to learning had been created by extremists among the reformers: "A new sect of spirituals has arisen, who condemn all good disciplines." "The runaway monks dare to prefer their own dreams to any Latin or Greek exegetes of sacred Scripture." These were calamitous times, he said in an address in 1526, hinting at "the sacrilege of certain people conspiring to bring about the ruin of all disciplines. They deter and discourage you from your undertaking, while vaunting their inspiration—what spirit this is, I do not know."[15]

Erasmus' views may also have influenced or reinforced the concerns of Willibald Pirckheimer in Nürnberg. Supportive of Luther at first, Pirckheimer was by the mid-1520s at odds with the city council over their implementation of the reformed doctrine.[16] They threatened to dissolve the monasteries, a move that affected Pirckheimer personally because several of his sisters and daughters had taken religious vows. Erasmus' complaints about the reformers therefore struck a sympathetic chord. They were destroying the fabric of life, Erasmus wrote: "It has meant the end of concord, charity, faith, discipline, manners, and civility." Pirckheimer's reply is extant only in an incomplete rough draft.[17] We do not know what he put into his letter to Erasmus, but it prompted the remark already quoted: "Wherever Lutheranism reigns, letters perish." Erasmus added that Lutherans "are interested in two things only: money and marriage." These sentiments are echoed by Pirckheimer in a letter of 1530 to Johann Tschertte, court architect of Charles V. In it he professed bitter disappointment at the course the Reformation had taken. "All honesty, good manners, arts and learning have fallen by the wayside. They are interested in nothing but physical pleasure, fame, possessions, and money."[18] We see a circular movement of ideas here, with Erasmus the likely source of inspiration.

Ironically, the misconception that humanists and reformers were allies persisted in the face of such recriminations. While humanists expressed their dissatisfaction and depicted the reformers as foes of the New Learning, scholastic theologians continued to describe them as foes of the old learning. Johann Eck, professor of theology at Ingolstadt, claimed that the Lutherans taught nothing but humanities and therefore were responsible for the decline of learning, especially in the disciplines

of philosophy and theology. Writing to Cardinal Contarini, he put his own construction on the events:

> Erasmus and the Lutherans encourage students to study only 'good literature' (that is the term they use for more elegant writings). They have corrupted philosophy together with theology. Even at those schools in Germany that are free of Lutheranism philosophy is ruined. There is no one who studies scholastic theology, only a few of us professors are still alive and working on its behalf. Even if I do not entirely praise the Parisians for mixing the philosophers' water with the wine of theology, I do not see how anyone can be an accomplished theologian who does not understand the patristic *Sentences* collected by Peter Lombard. . . . The schools, which Lutheranism has almost emptied, need reform and correction."[19]

Criticism from Within: The Erfurt Circle

Ideology colored Eck's view, and his account may be dismissed as the reconstructionist ramblings of a Catholic controversialist, but the perception of the reformers being inimical to *studia humaniora* appears also in the writings of men like the Erfurt humanist Eobanus Hessus, who supported the Reformation and was on friendly terms with Luther. It is a message, moreover, that can be found not only in the writings of individuals but also in institutional records. The matriculation lists of the University of Erfurt are a case in point. They confirm the perception that there was a cause-and-effect relationship between the rise of the reformers and the decline of learning. Until 1521 the Erfurt faculty was sympathetic to the Reformation. Luther, who visited the city in April of that year, was formally welcomed by the rector of the university, Crotus Rubeanus, and a number of his colleagues who rode out to greet him. Subsequent student unrest, which issued in destruction and physical threats against members of the clergy, dampened enthusiasm for Luther. Similar violent events in Wittenberg, now in the grip of Karlstadt and his radical followers, were witnessed by faculty and students from Erfurt, who had taken refuge there during a plague epidemic. These impressions may have contributed to the fact that, from 1522 on, the leading faculty members took a firm Catholic stand.[20]

The perception that the reformers were to blame for the dismal state of learning is reflected in the matriculation lists of the university for the years 1522–1526. In these years enrollment declined at an alarming rate, from 120 in the summer semester of 1521 to 14 in the winter semester 1526.[21] The rector's preamble to the list usually contains pious words about the dignity of learning, but also offers comments of varying length about the state of the university. The steep decline in enrollment evoked at first a general lament that "the study of literature has collapsed" (1521), that the academy "in which the study of literature used to flourish tranquilly" was now beset by troubles (1522). These concerns become more specific in 1523. As long as the city had not been shaken by religious dissent, we read, "the university enjoyed peace, and studies honour." Once factions developed among the citizens, the university was drawn into the controversies, "so that it seems war is being waged now against literature itself." As a result of unrest and fears of a plague epidemic, there were few students, university discipline collapsed, and academic degrees were no longer sought

after. "And is it surprising that this happens to schools, when the religion which has been handed down for many centuries is no longer safe from calumny?" (1523). In 1524–1525 we find references to the uprisings of the peasants, who, according to the rector, had been led astray by evangelical preachers. At the university, everything was in upheaval, "so that the humanities appear to have been relegated to the New Islands."

Studies languished for the rest of the decade and enrollment figures hovered around 20, as is acknowledged in the records of 1530: "The decline of the august University of Erfurt that (oh grief!) has now lasted for many years has not yet been halted, although several good and well-known men faithfully laboured for its restoration." In 1531, the blame for the decline is clearly attached to the Lutherans: "Many years ago the city of Erfurt was governed in happy peace and concord, but recently a certain pseudo-Augustinian (*Augustiniaster*), a perfidious apostate, arose, the instigator and author of discord, hatred, and schism." A list of Luther's misdeeds follows, with the indignant comment that he "dared to call the academies 'brothels.'" The entry for 1533 is even more explicit in attaching blame to the reformers, but there is a new optimism, coupled with the expectation that the university, recently made the beneficiary of several legacies, could be restored to its former splendor: "The sweet Muses of literature are beginning to lift their weary heads and languidly resume their singing." There was hope that the university, "which until now has been in a state of desolation and collapse, afflicted beyond words by the audacity of some people and the perversity of the schismatics, will now rise from the ashes . . . and be revived."[22]

Perceptions similar to those reflected in the matriculation records can be traced in the writings of Eobanus Hessus, the leading champion of humanism at the university. He, too, saw the evangelicals as foes of the *studia humanitatis*. He was, however, an admirer of Luther. His criticism was therefore plaintive rather than pungent. Writing to Johann Draconites, a former colleague who had converted to Lutheranism, he congratulated him on his success as an evangelical preacher, but in the same breath complained about other converts who discouraged learning. "Ex-monks have almost destroyed the humanities under the pretext of gospel teaching. Their pestilential sermons rob the right kind of studies of their authority. . . . Our university is deserted, we ourselves are held in contempt."[23] At the same time, Eobanus also wrote to Johann Lang, the principal reformer in Erfurt, protesting his disparaging references to "sophists" at the university.[24] He had earlier described the effect of the Reformation on the university in three dialogues, which in part reflect his dispute with Lang.[25] In the first, entitled "Melaenus," three humanists express dismay that their hard-won gains have been lost in the turmoil of the Reformation. The evangelical preachers are depicted as the principal culprits. They are said to be hostile toward the humanities and actively discouraging their pursuit. One of the humanists, Martin Hune, confronts Melaenus, a "preacher of the new wisdom." The following dialogue ensues:

H[UNE]: New wisdom! What do you mean, my good sir?

M[ELAENUS]: I mean Christ.

H: Christ? He is indeed supreme wisdom, but what monstrous suggestion is this? Have we previously been ignorant of Christ?

M: We certainly have been.

H: How so?

M: Through the fault of those ignorant men who mixed up the superstition of philosophy—Aristotelian primarily—with the teaching of Christ.

Melaenus' criticism is obviously aimed at the scholastics; but he also attacks humanistic studies, which prompts Hune to ask:

H: But tell me, why are you an enemy of studies that are good?

M: I can hardly imagine what you would call "good studies." I suspect you mean the humanities, whereas I call "good studies" those that concern Christ.[26]

Melaenus represents those reformers who wanted to curtail the curriculum, reducing it to religious studies; they rejected the humanities as secular, not to say, pagan in spirit. This theme is developed further in a second dialogue, entitled "Misologus." Two humanists, Heinrich Stromer and Johann Bonemilch, reminisce about their short-lived victory over the foes of learning. It seems that literary studies are now faring worse than ever. The old scholastic enemies have been replaced by a new guard, men "who under the pretext of evangelical truth do much evil." They "butcher literature and rape the Muses." Misologus, one of the new adversaries, appears on the scene and explains his position. Using humanistic catchphrases, he deplores the "sophists" who have replaced good literature with "barbarism." Stromer objects that the old sophists are long gone: "But there are no sophists here. You cannot name even one sophist at this institution!"[27] He demands to know what "sordid sophists" Misologus has in mind. From Misologus' explanation it becomes clear that his complaints are directed against scholastic theologians as well as humanists. The people he so curiously combines under the label "sophists" "teach Aristotle instead of Paul and are committed to certain poets and orators instead of the gospel." Stromer protests this description of the Erfurt curriculum: "Are you not aware that at this university the gospel and Paul are taught to a larger audience than any poets or orators?" His friend Bonemilch joins in: "And no one denies that this is as it should be, but in my opinion humane studies should not be disdained and regarded as shameful and useless subjects, whose enjoyment is practically considered a capital crime, even if they are approached with a pious mind." The humanities prepared a student for the study of theology. "For who does not know that a knowledge of languages and, even more so, of eloquence is needed by the theologian." Misologus, however, persists in his anti-intellectual stand:"I detest universities and curse them. It is incredible how much fatal poison they spread over the whole world, for they teach nothing but human traditions."[28] The humanists continue to argue their point, but Misologus departs unconvinced of the merits of their argument, and the friends once more lament the fate of the humanities. The old scholastic enemy has been vanquished, but "now that this victory has been won, an unforeseen calamity has befallen us. Our ruin is imminent, unless all students take up arms in defense of the humanities. There is great danger that the evangelicals will preach Christian doctrine in such a manner that, if they have their will, the liberal arts will be completely wiped out."[29]

We find similar views expressed in the letter of another Erfurt scholar, Michael

Nossenus, who likewise connected the decline of humanism at Erfurt with the presence of the evangelical preachers. He lamented the loss of learning in a letter to Johann Draconites: "You may say: but sacred learning has replaced profane. True, but I cannot easily explain to you how pointless such labour is. I fear nothing worse than that piety too will collapse once its literary foundation has been destroyed and that barbarism will invade and extinguish completely the tiny sparks of religion and learning."[30]

Eobanus' third dialogue, entitled "The Fugitives," is a variant on the same theme. Two humanists, Eusebius and Pomponius, commemorate the brief victory of the humanities: "A little while ago the best studies were introduced. . . . Greek, Latin, and even Hebrew could be seen competing for the highest prize in this very arena. What madness is this? How suddenly has our hope collapsed? How is it that the glory was lost, which seemed practically within our grasp? And we were expecting nothing of this sort! How is it that victory has been snatched from our hands, when it was so close!" The enemies who had appeared so suddenly were "boors, dull unlearned men, demagogues, crawling out of their caves of ignorance everywhere, a bane for all studies; miraculously, unbelievably ignorant runaway [monks]."[31] Two runaways, named Blattus ("cockroach") and Gryllus ("grasshopper"), appear on the scene. The humanists challenge the "boring, bumbling, beastly" fellows to explain their rationale: "You are illiterate yourself, and proclaim everywhere that a Christian needs no literature, needs no knowledge of languages, needs only German to attain a perfect understanding of the whole of Scripture—anyone could do so who either speaks or reads German."

> RUNAWAY: I think we are within our rights and doing well.
>
> HUMANIST: What? You inauspicious birds, or rather, worms—for you are no human beings—do you really think that you are doing what is truly right? But I see Cockroach does not speak nor make any noise with his wings. Grasshopper, why don't you chirp us something? What madness is besetting you? What fury is stinging you?

The humanists continue to berate their adversaries, but their words are lost on the runaways.[32]

The Reformers' Self-Image: Champions of the Humanities

Eobanus' dialogues present a summary of complaints against the reformers. Luther's extravagant language was partly to blame for the reputation of the reformers as foes of learning. In his campaign against scholastic theology he had called the universities "Gates of Hell," "dens of iniquity," and "whorehouses."[33] Thus he laid himself open to misinterpretation by those who applied his invectives against Catholic scholastic theologians to education in general. The negative perception was spreading and could no longer be ignored by the parties concerned. It was obvious that educational institutions were under siege. The reformers could not and did not deny the calamitous state of the universities, the decline in enrollment, the difficulty of attracting talented men to the teaching profession, but they refused to

take the blame for this development. We find three recurring themes in their explanations and justifications: outright denial that they were hostile to humanistic studies, usually accompanied by a deflection of the blame on fringe groups within the movement; an insistence that what critics called a lack of learning was merely a lack of superfluous and useless learning; and the explanation that students were discouraged from pursuing knowledge not by the reformers but by a lack of support from their parents, who measured the value of knowledge by the income it was likely to produce.

Deflecting blame on fringe groups was the most common reaction. The Protestant school ordinance of Saxony (1528), for example, noted disapprovingly that "some people consider it sufficient for a preacher to be able to read German, but this is a harmful deception."[34] Similarly, Joachim Vadianus, the reformer of St. Gall, wrote to Bullinger in Zurich: "There are in our time a number of evangelical ministers who have been led by a certain excessive respect for Scripture, to the wrong belief that pastors called to tend the flock of the Lord must not be allowed to read or have anything to do with any learning other than the truth of Holy Writ."[35] Urbanus Rhegius was another reformer who recognized this trend and warned against it:

> Some have heard that Christians are taught by God, and use this immediately to support their laziness and scorn all liberal education as useless. They assume a proud posture and exude complete confidence. The more boorish a man is, the more he glories in the Spirit, as if the Holy Spirit abhorred learning and knowledge, which are his own gifts. The result of this erroneous view is that peasants and artisans assume the office of preacher, boasting that literary studies are unnecessary because we are all taught by God. . . . And most of them have such scorn for elementary schools that they are now quite neglected, a neglect that pleases the devil, but very much displeases God."[36]

Justus Jonas goes as far as acknowledging that there was a connection between the rise of the reformers and the decline of schools, but clearly disapproves of the radical elements responsible for it: "A few years ago there were in Germany numerous universities. They were alive, active, and well attended at the time when religious teaching was quite dead. . . . Ever since the gospel has begun to make inroads in the world, many universities are practically deserted, as if it were shameful and criminal to pursue studies now that the true method of teaching and learning theology has become apparent."[37] Melanchthon specifically blamed Karlstadt for fostering anti-intellectual tendencies. He sharply condemned "the completely wrong opinion of those who think piety is expressed only in contempt for learning."[38] Similarly, Johann Bugenhagen wrote from Hamburg in 1526 that certain "boorish donkey-heads" thought they knew the way to heaven and set themselves up as teachers of others. All they had to offer was a show of holiness. They hated all learning, especially language studies, and "persuaded simple lay folk to keep their children from studying and to let them remain great donkeys. They cite Christ to protect their own lack of knowledge."[39]

A published exchange of letters between Eobanus Hessus, Luther, and his followers is perhaps meant to combat the image of the reformers as foes of humanistic learning. Eobanus had communicated his concerns to Luther directly in a versified

letter, in which the personified church ("The Captive") addresses Luther, her new "hope and life in Christ." She complains about the evangelical preachers, "a tribe so inimical to studies . . . that they consider it illegal to have consulted books."[40] Luther replied in a cordial tone, reassuring Eobanus:

> You fear that we Germans will become more barbarous than ever on account of a decline in letters—the result of our theology. Some people are often fearful, where there is no cause for fear. I am convinced that true theology cannot flourish without a knowledge of letters, just as I am convinced that it was in miserable decline and lying in ruins when letters were in decline and lying in ruins. I am certainly aware that God's Word has never been revealed without a preceding rise and flourishing of languages and letters, who as precursors prepare the way, just as [John] the Baptist did. I like nothing better than young men being exposed to poetry and rhetoric, for I see that such studies more than any others wonderfully prepare men to understand sacred matters and to treat them skillfully and felicitously. It is true that 'Wisdom makes the speech of infants learned', but the gift of tongues must not be disdained. I ask you therefore to add my prayers (for all they are worth) to yours when you tell your young people to apply themselves to poetry and rhetoric.[41]

In the meantime Johann Lang, who had been blamed for discouraging learning in Erfurt, attempted to clear his name in a letter published in 1521. Lang related that his sermons had given offense to some people because he had disparaged the authority of pagan philosophers. As a result he found himself ostracized from humanistic circles. His reputation had changed overnight: "[Earlier on] many said that Lang was learned in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, an excellent philosopher and theologian. I was frequently invited to dinners. Now I have become a nobody, who knows nothing, has no merit, no erudition, no authority." He protested that he was not opposed to secular learning per se, but wanted to put it in perspective. "Christ alone had the true wisdom and philosophy," he said. "However, if someone wishes to study dialectic or rhetoric or other disciplines to exercise his mind, I have no objection, as long as he does not take his pattern of life from them. For that role we reserve for the sacred words of God alone." Introducing such qualifications did not amount to a rejection of secular studies, he noted. "I have never said that [secular studies must be rejected]. It is not true that this is the tenor of my teaching. What do I teach, then? I do not want to see philosophical studies mixed up with sacred and purely theological writings, I will not allow secular studies to be preferred to sacred studies, I insist that philosophy be taught separately. Under these conditions I not only agree, but even endorse lectures in philosophy."[42]

While Lang's qualified support for secular studies did not match the firm assurances Luther had given to Eobanus, Joachim Camerarius, headmaster of the Latin school in reformed Nürnberg, offered solid support. He calmed Eobanus' fears. The reformers were wrongly perceived as hostile to liberal studies, he said. He was doing his best to promote them. It was true that the liberal arts, which had begun to flourish, "were almost destroyed in their first bloom by the ill will of men," but Camerarius himself supported rather than disparaged liberal arts. "Although I see how little I can do to support the arts in their decline, I have nevertheless applied the little talent I have to the task of maintaining and safeguarding them zealously. Nor did I al-

low myself to be stopped by the judgment of numerous people who consider it mean and shameful to take on this task."[43]

Melanchthon likewise addressed Eobanus' concerns. In letters to the Erfurt humanist, he acknowledged the prevailing fear that "the collapse of letters was imminent, so that our successors will be more boorish than [the scholastics]." He realized that those "who disdain humane letters under the pretext of theological studies . . . are just as wrong as that modern sophistic movement [scholasticism] and give rise to an even more boorish and impious sophistic philosophy than that last wave." They professed disdain for secular learning only "to cover up their indolence." Elsewhere Melanchthon acknowledged that the tumultuous events of the 1520s were endangering the progress of learning. Students deserted schools because "certain stupid preachers call them away from letters." These men did not represent mainstream evangelical thought. Melanchthon specifically criticized Anabaptists for being hostile to learning and distanced himself from any party that scorned education. "It is the height of stupidity that some people today believe that there can be no piety without contempt for all good literature and old learning."[44]

The Catholic apologist Johannes Cochlaeus[45] maliciously suggested that such protestations were a belated attempt at damage control. The reformers were no doubt responsible for the decline of learning, he said, and "this development began to affect the reputation of the Lutherans. Some of them had reached such a pitch of madness that they wanted to eliminate Greek and Latin and use only Hebrew and German. Some despised these languages as well and claimed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit. To deflect the blame from his party to the universities and monks, Luther wrote a booklet in German, [To the magistrates] . . . encouraging them to set up schools."[46] Contrary to Cochlaeus' claims, however, the efforts of the reformers to rehabilitate their image did not represent a *volte face*. Mainstream Lutherans had never been hostile toward learning. The message they sent out in the mid- and late 1520s was consistent with earlier statements by both Luther and Melanchthon on the importance of humanistic learning. In 1518, in a famous letter to his former teacher, Johann Trutfetter, Luther had defended the New Learning as essential to the formation of the theologian.[47] He repeated these sentiments in a letter to Melanchthon, saying that he "would not become a party to the ruin of the best studies."[48] Melanchthon, who began teaching at Wittenberg in 1518, promoted the humanities vigorously. The liberal arts, he said, allowed human beings "to receive the divine spirit sent from heaven." The decline of learning was intimately connected with the decline of religion:

> Perhaps it would have been easier if only one of them had collapsed. As long as the rites of the church were not corrupt, the decline of letters could easily have been halted; and if the humanities had remained intact, it would have been possible to correct the lapsed morale of the church, to rouse the human spirit lying prostrate, to strengthen and force it into a discipline. But either by fate or our own fault it happened that at the same time good letters were replaced by bad and the old piety by ceremonies, human traditions, constitutions, and decrees.

Although Melanchthon acknowledged that true theology was the work of the Holy Spirit, he also maintained that "beyond prophesy one must know the force of words, in which the divine mysteries are put up as in a shrine."[49]

Other mainstream reformers, too, combated the negative image that, they said, was foisted on them by humanists mistaking the attitude of extremists as representative of the movement as a whole. In Strasbourg Martin Bucer held Erasmus responsible for the bad press. Writing to Beatus Rhenanus in 1525, he protested:

> I hear that we are not only ridiculed but slandered by you as seditious and inimical to the humanities. . . . If that is true I am surprised that you, a prudent man and champion of the Muses, have not advised me earlier, if I have done any wrong in your opinion. For you once counted me as a friend, unless your letters have deceived me. A year ago, in Capito's house, I defended myself against the accusation of hating the humanities. I gave a sermon from the pulpit to encourage people to learn Greek, which Lonicerus was teaching in an empty lecture hall. I explained how eminently useful it was to study the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages. . . . I do not hate the humanities nor have I discouraged anyone from learning Latin. On the contrary, I have made every effort to see the schools here reformed by the Council, which we shall shortly see implemented. As for calling us seditious, I am even more annoyed. . . . perhaps you have learned this from Erasmus, in whose eyes everything that gives offense to princes and is at variance with the consensus of the ages is "sedition." I admire the man because of his many and outstanding talents, but I cannot approve his flattery of impious bishops and the Roman party.[50]

Bucer's colleague, Wolfgang Capito, whose humanistic credentials could not be impugned, likewise wrote about the Strasbourg initiative, but put his support for language studies in perspective: "They call us haters of eloquence, although we keenly support the teaching of languages out of pious zeal and have actively pursued this matter with the council for two years now. I admire eloquence in others, but for our youth we aim at piety first of all and a knowledge of languages and a modicum of style, for we regard the greatest orators a blight on humanity, unless they combine this skill with probity."[51] The man who was best able to defend the reputation of the reformers in Strasbourg was Johann Sturm, a tireless champion of the humanities. In his programmatic treatise *The Correct Organization of Schools*, Sturm announced that the goal of studies was *sapiens et eloquens pietas*, wise and eloquent piety. The liberal arts played an important role in obtaining this goal. Sturm was a humanist at heart, and it was primarily through his merit that Strasbourg remained a center of humanistic learning. In his eyes the reformation of religion could never be at odds with the preservation of learning. "It is a great honour to be called Master of Liberal Arts and of Philosophy . . . for the knowledge of all things and wisdom itself are properly the possession and faculty of God and the study of these things has always been considered an honest undertaking."[52]

In Basel, the leading reformer, Johannes Oecolampadius, made every effort to establish himself in the public eye as a man committed to the revival of humanistic learning. He deplored "the calamity of our time, in which there is a scarcity of students no less than of doctors." He vowed to improve conditions in Basel and reform the university.[53] In 1533 the city council strongly endorsed efforts to attract professors to teach the humanities. One of Amerbach's correspondents, Johann Uebelin, then studying in Paris and soon to obtain a position as teacher in Basel, expressed his pleasure at these developments. "This gives me great hope," he wrote, "that our academy will once again emerge into the light and return to life, as it were, and that

the studies which have so far been neglected and almost trodden under foot will recover their former dignity."[54]

This kind of advertising by friends of the reformers and strong expressions of personal commitment by the reformers themselves was one way of overcoming the perception that they were hostile to learning. Oecolampadius pursued a second line of defense as well. He challenged his critics' definition of learning in an open letter to Johann Eck, who had accused the reformers of ignorance. With fine irony, Oecolampadius called the epistle "[a] letter from the ignorant canons to the most glorious, superbly learned, triumphant Professor Magister Johann Eck."[55] "Whatever our ignorance," he wrote, "we prefer to learn from those authors of old who were rather close in time to the apostles than from you and from men of your kind." The supporters of Luther were perhaps lacking in education but not in piety:

> We acknowledge our ignorance, which is perhaps more to our credit than your high-sounding self-praise. We are ignorant, yes, ignorant of the art of cultivating those who are excessively keen on filthy lucre . . . ignorant, for we do not understand how the perfect can imitate Christ in his poverty while swearing allegiance to temporal causes . . . ignorant, because we have not penetrated the inner sanctum of the divine Majesty, but even Paul, that great apostle, was not ashamed to be thus ignorant.

Oecolampadius disarmed his critic by separating intellectual from moral virtue and noting that academic knowledge did not guarantee piety.

The argument that the decline of learning was the consequence of crass materialism provided reformers with a third line of defense. They argued that they were doing their best to promote education but there was no corresponding zeal in the population. They were largely indifferent to the reformers' pleas. Luther blamed the low enrollment in schools on the greed and worldliness of parents, who directed their children to training that promised wealth, rather than to studies whose benefits were of a less tangible nature. This is the explanation he offers in two tracts, written in 1524 and 1530 and addressed to city councils and parents, respectively. "Because the worldly mob sees that they can no longer push their sons, daughters and friends into cloisters and foundations, . . . none of them want to let their children teach or study. Ha! they say. Why should we let them study if they won't become priests, monks, or nuns? Let them learn something that will feed them."[56] Melanchthon repeated this explanation in a speech in praise of the new Latin school in Nürnberg, which he had helped to establish. He congratulated the city council on investing in education when many neglected it, "fearing for their stomachs, and seeking refuge in income-producing skills now that there is no longer any hope of living on the tithes of priests, the only return for their labour they can think of. For how few are the people who admire excellence sufficiently to believe it should be cultivated for its own sake." Elsewhere he wrote that many "abandoned schooling for profitable professions. How small is the difference between such men and beasts, since they prefer to cultivate their stomachs rather than their minds?"[57] We find the same pattern of thought in Oecolampadius' explanation of the conditions at Basel. Now that Catholic benefices were no longer available, parents were unwilling to invest money in their children's education, he said. They did not understand that they should do

so "for the glory of Christ and the benefit of their native city."[58] In Strasbourg Sturm likewise linked the desperate state of schooling to the financial expectations of parents. Enrollment declined, he said, "because there is no financial support, not because religion has been reformed." As long as the Church provided livings, parents were eager to fund their children's studies: "Now people conclude that their children had best live for their own advantage . . . and steer them toward the plebeian arts."[59] We have seen that Georg Witzel, a Lutheran who returned to the Catholic faith, was one of those who blamed the reformers for the decline of learning, but even he acknowledged that career expectations played a role: "[Parents] interrupted their childrens' schooling and obliged them to become artisans, either because the clerical office is now in great disrepute or because they do not have the means to support literary studies. The question nowadays is, not how much a man knows, but how much money he has. Knowledge is not honoured."[60]

While most reformers appealed to the parents' sense of duty, Luther addressed their commercial instincts as well. In view of the scorn he had expressed elsewhere for their worldly concerns, it is ironic that he should hawk education in terms of the stockbroker's maxim "Buy low, sell high": "Dear Germans, buy. The market is right at your doorstep." Teachers were "in good supply and to be had at a good price."[61] But there would be a shortage of these commodities soon, for schools and universities had ceased to produce graduates in sufficient numbers. "The universites of Erfurt, Leipzig, and others are ailing, as are the schools for boys. It is lamentable to see that Wittenberg, small as it is, must struggle almost alone and do its best." It was true that some evangelical preachers were forced to live in poverty, but this was due to the fact that people were "evil, ungrateful, and miserly." These pious teachers were martyrs to the Protestant cause. Conditions were bound to change soon. Now was a promising time to study. Wealth and honor awaited those who acquired learning. Employment opportunities would be plentiful. "Every scholar will be courted by two princes and three cities," Luther promised.[62]

Complaints and Justifications: Like Ships Passing in the Night

The reputation of the reformers as foes of the humanities lingered in spite of their efforts to dissociate themselves from the anti-intellectual fringe and in spite of the initiative they displayed in founding schools in their territories as evidenced in the more than 100 school ordinances published before 1600. Some of the critics were unaware, perhaps, of the changing circumstances and projected an image frozen in time. Others continued to blame the reformers for the opinions of a radical minority in their ranks. More significantly, however, the controversy between humanists and reformers remained unresolved because the charges answered did not match the charges laid.

The fast-paced developments between 1520 and 1530 and the latitude of pedagogical approaches among reformers provided a slippery basis for accusations and defenses. The Reformation played a role in the decline of educational institutions in the 1520s as well as in the rise of new foundations in the 1530s. There is no acknowledgment (and perhaps no understanding) of this development in the writings of

leading humanists like Erasmus and Pirckheimer, or of Catholic apologists like Cochlaeus. Most critics, moreover, dwelled on extreme examples. They tended to turn a blind eye to the broad scope of views held by the reformers, some of whom were enthusiastic champions of the humanities while others (as Melanchthon put it) "taught children nothing but the Scriptures."[63] Melanchthon's own credentials as a teacher of the humanities were impeccable. We have seen that Erasmus specifically exempted him from the charges he leveled against the reformers. Other educators in the evangelical camp—Johann Sturm, Johann Bugenhagen, Otto Brunfels, to name a few—showed a similar commitment to liberal studies. Indeed, Protestant school ordinances in general show a respect for humanistic studies. They place emphasis on grammar, rhetoric, and language studies, the core subjects of the humanistic curriculum. Among the prescribed textbooks are approved classical authors and manuals written by renowned humanists. The works of Cicero, Terence, Plautus, and Vergil are prominent in the curriculum outlines; the works of Agricola, Melanchthon, Mosellanus, and Erasmus are recommended as textbooks.[64]

One would expect such a program to satisfy the champions of liberal studies. And yet humanist critics write with a sense of betrayal, a sense that the reformers who seemingly embraced humanistic studies used them for their own purposes. In short, the continued criticism represents a complaint against the confessionalization of humanistic pedagogy. Humanists and reformers held distinct ideas concerning the nature and purpose of the *studia humanitatis*. Erasmus' complaint against the Strasbourg reformers points to the ideological differences: "What the schools will bring us, which they have instituted all over their cities and towns, remains to be seen," Erasmus writes. "It matters a great deal what is taught in their schools: [they teach] mainly dogmas and languages. But these dogmas of theirs don't suit everyone, and language studies don't make for a well rounded education."[65] Significantly Erasmus' criticism is aimed at what he perceives as the narrow focus of the reformers' schools, the ideological straitjacket they placed on education. His summary of the reformed curriculum as *dogmata et linguae*, "dogmas and languages," could indeed serve as a heading for many Protestant school ordinances. The Erasmian phrase has a neat parallel in Johann Bugenhagen's ordinance for Lüneburg (1564), which establishes "catechism and languages" as the twin focus of the curriculum: "[The purpose is] to instruct children in the catechism and in languages." The purpose was "to produce learned people who will be effective and competent in the government of church and state; schools are indeed the seedbeds of church and state."[66] The reformers' pedagogical program fell short of the humanistic vision, which recognized the fulfillment of one's duty to God and society as goals of education, but added to them the duty to fulfill one's own potential.

While self-improvement is the unstated aim of any educational effort, the stated aim in many Protestant school ordinances was the training of competent professionals and orderly citizens: "good schoolmasters, good preachers, good jurists, good physicians, good, God-fearing, industrious, honest, truthful, obedient, productive, learned, peaceful (not wild, but contented) citizens." To provide young people with a liberal education was in the interest of both church and state, for "schools are, so to speak, the seedbeds of pious and learned men, who emerge from them well equipped for all office and duty . . . in church and state."[67] Most Protestant school

ordinances contained similar mission statements. In his address to city councils, Luther had declared: "We must have people who give us God's word and the sacraments and who are curators of the soul among the people. But where shall we get such men, if we let schools waste away and do not institute other, more Christian ones? For the existing schools, even if they did not waste away, could give us nothing but useless, lost, harmful seducers."[68] The purpose of schools, Luther implied, was to produce civic and religious leaders, a purpose that was reflected in a curriculum focused on language studies and moral education through biblical studies. The purpose of education was "to advance children as soon as possible in the useful languages, since the Old Testament is written in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek, so that they may become good theologians and be well equipped for other noble and necessary arts: government, civil service, and administration."[69] In his address to parents, Luther rehearsed the same theme. He admonished them to send their children to school "that they may serve the Church as doctors, preachers, and ministers." He justified Latin schools with specific reference to the need for well-educated clergymen. He lashed out against those "who deny God and their own children the dignity and benefit of sending them to school that they might engage in splendid and godly professions serving God and the world."[70]

It is clear that the reformers promoted language studies, but their rationale differed from that offered by the older generation of humanists. Both groups promoted biblical languages because they allowed the student to gain firsthand knowledge of the sources and a better understanding of the literal meaning of the Scriptures. Beyond that, however, humanists tended to laud the beauty of language and its persuasive force. In the pedagogical tracts of the reformers the rationale is often limited to the sphere of scriptural exegesis and effective preaching. Certainly these are the functions most often mentioned. Indeed, the link between language studies and orthodox faith is prominent in reformed education. "This much is certain," Luther wrote. "Where the study of languages perishes, the gospel must perish in the end. . . . it was therefore a foolish undertaking to want to understand Holy Scripture through patristic exegesis and by reading many books and glosses. Instead one should have looked to language studies . . . for language studies are to the patristic glosses like the sun to shadows."[71] There can be no doubt, then, that the humanities formed an important part of the reformed curriculum. They were, however, appreciated not for their inherent worth but for their propedeutic value. "I do not despise secular studies," Guillaume Farel wrote, "as long as they are ancillary to studies concerned with the divine." His student and friend Jean Canaye echoed his master's ideals. He reported that he was diligently studying Latin and Greek as "necessary aids to the understanding of the Word of God," but noted that such understanding must be sought "more from that Spirit on high, who breathes where he will, than from lengthy studies and vigils."[72] Similar ideas were propagated by Oecolampadius. Educational efforts must be directed toward "producing, not learned, but good men, that is, truly learned men taught by God." Intellectual training covered only so much ground; divine help must do the rest: "It is easy to impart doctrines to your hearers, to pour them into their ears, but difficult to change their hearts. This is God's task."[73]

Thus the educational aims and the curriculum outlined by the reformers in

their school ordinances resembled, but did not match in its emphasis, the program drawn up by an earlier generation of humanists. They adopted some of their pedagogical ideas, for example, in portraying education as a central duty rather than a fringe benefit, in stressing its civic dimension, in placing emphasis on language training, and in taking a child-centered approach. Yet older humanists did not recognize in this program their own recipe for a liberal education. Some differences were a matter of priorities; others were fundamental. Both programs had a strong moral dimension, but the reformers taught doctrine, while the watchword of the humanists was personal piety, a sense of ethics that could be learned not only from Christian sources but also from the moralists of antiquity, from Cicero's *De officiis* or Plutarch's *Moralia*.[74] Significantly, Protestant school ordinances were an integral part of church ordinances and had the same confessional orientation; early humanist manuals, by contrast, contain no more than a nod to religious practices that were taken for granted as an integral part of everyone's life. Language studies are central to both the humanist and the reformed curriculum, but in the early humanist manuals their purpose is to enable the student to read classical literature for its style and content; in the reformed curriculum they become exegetical tools. Another sensible difference between the humanistic and reformed curriculum was the latter's marginalization of the joy of learning, or a sense of intellectual and esthetic pleasure derived from literary pursuits. There is a certain earnestness, even dourness, in the Protestant school ordinances that contrasts with the expressions of exuberance and delight in the learning experience so pervasive in the writings of humanists from Petrarch to Erasmus. For Petrarch, reading Homer was a passionate affair; for Machiavelli, entering his library to commune with the authors of old was a social occasion. For Erasmus and his circle, intellectual pursuits provided a romantic escape from the cares of life and allowed them to "dream literate dreams."[75] Because learning was seen as an intensely pleasurable activity, Enea Silvio Piccolomini felt obliged to caution students not to abandon themselves completely to intellectual joys, "for it goes against our duty to withdraw from active life in our zeal for them." Luther, by contrast, did not consider intellectual pleasure an argument that would enhance the value of education in the eyes of his followers. He sheepishly acknowledged: "I won't mention what a fine pleasure it is to be an educated man, even if one never attains a position . . . for that learning is a pleasure motivates few people, perhaps."[76]

The most fundamental difference in the respective pedagogies was anthropological, however. Early humanist manuals promote the idea that the human potential is realized through education and the desire to be educated. The "dignity of man," that quintessential Renaissance concept mythologized in Pico della Mirandola's famous oration, is predicated on the human being's ability to benefit from education and rise above other creatures. "Remember that a man without education has no humanity," Erasmus wrote. In his eyes "man was not born but made human" through education. Speaking of the trilingual college at Louvain, he said that it brought forth "citizens who are true human beings. For men who are ignorant of letters (which are not called the humanities for nothing) scarcely deserve the name of men."[77] Protestant pedagogy was largely based on the pessimistic Augustinian view of the corrupt soul, which in Vincent de Beauvais' words was "not only untaught, but even incapable of instruction."[78] As has been pointed out by Gerald Strauss in

his excellent study of schools in Reformation Germany, there was a basic contradiction between this anthropology and the reformer's pedagogical efforts that required a strict separation of theological concepts from practical considerations. This contradiction carries over into the pedagogical manuals of reformers, where we find pronouncements ranging from Johann Agricola's assertion that "human nature being evil, we . . . profit nothing from instruction" to Veit Dietrich's optimistic comment on a newly founded school: "You will now see daily improvement and steadily increasing well-being in body and soul in your community and within each household."[79] In line with the Augustinian anthropology, Protestant school ordinances place emphasis on the correction of faults rather than on self-fulfillment. Bugenhagen, for example, noted that children stood in need of education because "they are inclined toward evil on account of our sinful nature." Similarly, Christoph Hegendorf emphasized that human nature was corrupt since Adam's fall and "people are more readily inclined toward evil than toward good." These evils could be corrected by education, and especially by biblical studies.[80] Although both humanists and reformers showed an appreciation for the civilizing effects of studies, Protestant educators tended to stress the corrective more than the edifying function of education. In their eyes its purpose was to repress rather than to foster human nature.

We have seen that Erasmus criticized the reformers for focusing on "dogmas and languages." Had he lived longer, he might have observed that the confessionalization of education was not confined to the reformed schools. Both Catholics and Protestants were determined to make schools a vehicle of indoctrination, and this aim was superimposed on language studies. A comparison between two allegorical skits, written by a Protestant and a Catholic educator, respectively, will illustrate the confessionalization of humanism in both camps: *Priscianus vapulans* (The Beating of Priscian), by Nicodemus Frischlin, performed on the occasion of the centenary of the University of Tübingen in 1578;[81] and *Regnum Humanitatis* (The Reign of Humanity), by Jacob Gretser, performed in 1587 at the Jesuit College in Ingolstadt.[82] Both skits deal with the topos of curing the ailing grammarian Priscian and take aim at the barbaric language of scholastics as well as the exaggerated Ciceronianism of humanists. In Frischlin's play, however, we find among the characters two Catholic theologians, Quodlibetarius and Breviarius, whose unsuccessful attempts at curing Priscian involve confession and exorcism. The ancient grammarian's condition improves only on learning of the works of Erasmus and Melanchthon. In Gretser's play, by contrast, Priscian's condition improves only after the textbooks of Erasmus, Melanchthon, and Ramus are replaced by patristic writings. In a sequel to *Regnum Humanitatis*,[83] Gretser turns Priscian into an inquisitor. He demands to see the catalog of a bookseller returning from the Frankfurt book fair and orders him to strike out Ramus and Erasmus, whose works were on the Catholic Index of Prohibited Books. Thus both plays superimpose a confessional angle on educational philosophy. It is of course ironic that Erasmus, who had attacked the confessionally oriented education of first-generation Protestants, should by the end of the century be used as a model by a Protestant author and rejected as suspect by a Catholic. The two plays, both of which praise humanistic studies, show the similarities in the cultural program of Catholics and Protestants, but also demonstrate its confessionalization.

It has been noted by modern scholars that the schism of the church destroyed

the international character of universities and schools and reduced academic freedom. Parents and officials preferred to keep their children at home where they would not be exposed to heterodox doctrines. Pledging adherence to the city's or the region's creed became a condition of employment for teachers.[84] Bucer wrote to the scholarchs of the Strasbourg Gymnasium in 1544, warning them that it was not safe for young people to study in Catholic Louvain. Similarly, Bugenhagen wrote to the Danish king, Christian III, warning him to hire "only our scholars for the university in Copenhagen and as preachers. . . . we would not want false teaching to enter Denmark under the guise of learning."[85] Protestant parents who neglected the confessional angle in favor of quality of education met with sharp criticism from their pastors. In Königsberg, Georg Reimann thundered against parents who, attracted by the quality of Jesuit schools, "willingly and knowingly placed their children where they were at risk of losing eternal salvation." Wilhelm Roding of Heidelberg similarly protested: "What a terrible mistake to surrender one's children to the teaching of such beasts and let them tumble into Hell! They say that the boys are too young to be influenced by the teaching of the Jesuits . . . but they are very fine and very shrewd teachers who know how to shape the natural bend of each student."[86] In their worry about the wrong kind of indoctrination Catholics did not differ from reformers. In 1535 Cochlaeus reported on the dangers of sending students to Wittenberg: "They follow Melanchthon, and fall into Luther's snares. Many secular princes have specifically instructed their subjects in public edicts not to send their sons there to study letters. Yet the Holy See, whose concern it should principally be, has kept silent about this matter and has looked the other way now for years, not to say decades."[87] The Council of Trent, however, paid due attention to this aspect. The assembled delegates were keenly aware that schools could serve the purpose of religious indoctrination. They spoke of "the evil of heresies which continue to increase in number and make it imperative that nothing be left undone which may seem likely to touch on the education of the people and the defense of the Catholic faith." Religious instruction was an important weapon in this battle. It must be integrated into the curriculum of public schools "for the defense of the Catholic faith and the preservation, increase, and dissemination of orthodox teaching . . . and the same holy synod decrees that no one must be admitted to the task of lecturing, either publicly or privately, whose life, character, and knowledge has not been examined and approved by the bishop."[88] In England, Catholic parents were sending their sons to Louvain, Rheims, Valladolid, or Douai. In Catholic Austria the authorities instituted schools for the same reasons given by Luther, "because almost all of the German Empire labours under a shortage of clergy." The decree of the provincial synod of the archbishopric of Salzburg, which contains this rationale, also provides that such instruction be free and provided by orthodox teachers. To ensure that they were free of Protestant notions none were to be hired as rectors or assistants "who had within the last three years studied in places and schools, where that suspected and contagious doctrine has been taught or treasured" unless they swore allegiance to the Catholic church. The *Acta* (1558) of the Dominican Order forbade their members to attend universities other than those explicitly approved by the order.[89] The Jesuits everywhere answered (and in some cases, anticipated) the concerns of the Council of Trent. Ignatius of Loyola wrote to

Petrus Canisius in 1554: "Increasing the number of Jesuit schools everywhere . . . is the best means of aiding the church in its tribulations."[90]

The *studia humanitatis*, then, were caught in the undertow of the Reformation debate. They were promoted in reformed and newly founded schools, but only incidentally. As education became confessionalized and polarized along sectarian lines, both Catholics and reformers appropriated the humanistic curriculum and adapted it to their own purposes. The moral teachings of earlier humanists had lacked a doctrinal cast. Indeed there had been no need for precision as long as Christendom was undivided. Now piety was classified, and knowledge came in Catholic and Protestant hues. The confessionalization of education in the sixteenth century reflects a loss of innocence that is paralleled in the development of every child. I remember my first consciousness-raising experience of this kind. In grade school, a Jewish classmate and I used to exchange Christmas wishes until we became aware of the difference in our respective religious beliefs. We stopped wishing each other happy holidays. A simple act of good will had become absurd to our "confessionalized" minds.

No Room for Skeptics

Paul Oskar Kristeller has pointed out that humanism is "a cultural and educational program" rather than a philosophy.[1] This is not to deny that humanists reshaped classical philosophy in their own image. Modern scholars studying the relationship between humanism and classical schools of thought have focused their attention on Aristotelianism (the humanist critique of) and Platonism (the humanist revival of), and have dealt less frequently with the relationship between humanism and skepticism in the early sixteenth century. This marginalization is due to a tendency to concentrate on demonstrable, formal connections between humanistic writings and the transmitters of classical thought. Such formal connections are admittedly rare. There is a paucity of references to classical sources such as Cicero's *Academica* and an almost total lack of citations from Sextus Empiricus before 1562, when the editio princeps of his *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* appeared.[2] However, we must take into consideration that Aristotelianism and Platonism were Christianized during the Middle Ages, whereas skepticism was perceived as essentially incompatible with Christian beliefs and routinely labeled "atheist." One cannot therefore expect to find in Christian writers of the Renaissance an open avowal of skepticism. Marsilio Ficino noted that it was "rejected by every one of the outstanding philosophers." Two hundred years later, the Groningen professor Martin Schoock, author of a history of skepticism, confirmed that modern adherents of this philosophy kept a low profile: "We must not be surprised if there seem to be rather few proponents and disseminators of skepticism. They like to stay in hiding." Schoock regarded it as a philosophy that was bound to terminate in atheism.[3] Given the sinister reputation of skepticism, it was risky in the sixteenth century to profess an interest in the philosophy or in its methodology, the *ars dubitandi*. It is necessary therefore to look for crypto-skepticism and informal expressions of a Skeptical frame of mind. These took the form of a preference for certain literary genres such as open-ended dialogue, paradox, and rhetorical declamation, forms that allowed the author to present arguments on both sides of a question or to play devil's advocate. Approached in this manner, skepticism becomes a discernible phenomenon in sixteenth-century writings. Indeed, some critics identified it as a feature or by-product of humanistic education.

The Louvain theologian Jacques Masson is an important witness to this perception. In a dialogue entitled *Dialogus de trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione* (Dialogue about the Three Languages and the Method of Studying Theology,

1518) he associated skepticism with humanism in general.[4] He began by depicting biblical humanists as perverters of theology, who

> equate theology with rhetoric, who say that [without rhetoric] it is uncultured, frigid, flimsy, and weak, and hardly worthy of a human being. They are the people who say that rhetoric or poetry has given us the leading lights of ancient theology . . . who continually demand from the theologian grammar, languages, and rhetoric. Indeed, in their book, theology consists of these things, and on their account Origen is praised to high heaven. A book pleases them if its language is pure, correct, and elegant. They defend a man with the argument that he cherishes literature. They reject a book that is "barbarous," meaning not written in classical Latin.

After this description of the humanists' literary propensities, Masson proceeds to discuss their mental habits, noting in particular their negative attitude toward authority and their rejection of dogmatism. They protest if their speech

> is hemmed in by the doctrines of the church, if they cannot freely assert or deny things. They are displeased with rules and canonical laws, with the penalties prescribed against heretics and schismatics. They say the doctrines of the church must be defended with arguments, not terror. They believe they have sufficiently justified their position, if they affirm it in one place and deny or cast doubt on it in another. In their commentaries they want to have the freedom to state their own or another man's opinion. They say they are not doctrinaire.

Masson rejected open-ended argumentation or arguing on both sides of a question because it leaves doubt. This kind of argument was incompatible with Christian philosophy, he said. Brushing aside all epistemological difficulties, he declared that the Christian must be assertive: "It is sufficient for the lover of truth to embrace truth itself and corroborate it with firm arguments."

Masson saw humanists as doubters, who destabilized accepted belief. Skepticism, or at any rate the mental habit of systematic doubt, had certainly left its imprint on the humanist tradition. It is inherent in Lorenzo Valla's rejection of the dogmatism of Aristotelians and in Rudolf Agricola's questioning of the validity or sufficiency of proofs based on formal syllogisms.[5] It can be seen more generally in the marked preference of humanists for dialogues, the literary means of sowing doubt. Using dialogue, Petrarch was able to defend both the active and the contemplative life; and Bruni could both condemn and praise the rhetorical powers of his contemporaries. Pico and Politian could argue for and against the merits of rhetoric and philosophy in their letters, which functioned as a dialogue and contained reported dialogue. Similarly, Erasmus could pass off criticism of the church in his *Colloquies* as bantering. All of these compositions employed rhetorical devices calculated to present contradictory evidence and thus to induce doubt. In other words, the authors (or their dramatic characters) posed as Skeptics, even if they did not advocate skepticism.

Although Luther's designation of Erasmus as a "Skeptic" is well known, the use of this term in reference to systematic doubt is rare in the sixteenth century. Calvin referred to doubters as "disciples of Socrates" and adherents of the "New Academy."[6] Others referred to skeptics as "atheists" (wrongheaded), "Lucianists" (scoffer, doubter), or "Epicureans." The last term had several shades of meaning, including

indulgence in worldly pleasures, skepticism, or a lack of concern in matters of religion. The Strasbourg reformer Caspar Hedio labeled men "who believe in nothing at all" "Epicureans," and Bucer referred to "Epicureans and Saduccees who do not believe" and "hate religion."[7] Werner Bellardi, who examined the usage of the Strasbourg reformers, concluded that the most likely group to be labeled "Epicureans" were humanists who were open-minded, tolerant, and inclined to skepticism.[8] Humanists were also targeted as "Lucianists." The Greek satirist Lucian enjoyed considerable popularity among Renaissance humanists.[9] They saw in him a kindred spirit, a man who stood for intellectual freedom and dared to challenge the status quo. These qualities struck a chord with humanists on both sides of the Alps. Leon Battista Alberti, Giovanni Pontano, Willibald Pirckheimer, Eobanus Hessus, Erasmus, and Thomas More are among Lucian's admirers. In the prefaces to their editions, translations, and adaptions we find words of approval for his skepticism and praise for his attacks on intellectual pretensions.[10] Church authorities of course frowned on the Greek author and predictably called him an atheist who mocked the gods. Evidently, they made a connection between the literary tastes and the religious attitudes of humanists favoring Lucian. Erasmus' interest in the author was often cited by critics questioning his orthodoxy. Luther labeled Erasmus "an enemy of all religion . . . a perfect image of Epicurus and Lucian;" and he called on Christ to condemn "this atheist, Lucian, Epicurus."[11] The Franciscan Nicolaus Ferber of Herborn compared Erasmus' *Colloquies* to Lucian's dialogues. Both used satire to undermine authority and "destroyed not only innocence but also faith."[12] Spanish and French theologians also referred disapprovingly to Erasmus' interest in Lucian, and the Spanish Franciscan Luis Carvajal called Erasmus a "lucianizing old man" and an "atheist" like Lucian.[13] Similar labels were applied to other humanists, notably to Etienne Dolet and François Rabelais.[14]

Modern scholars exploring the popularity of Lucian in the Renaissance have noted that humanists make surprisingly little reference to the philosophical and theological implications of his skepticism. Christopher Robinson, who examined the subject, offers this explanation: "None of the [Lucianic] pieces seems to have been read in other than a purely historical way, as a comic discrediting of pagan beliefs."[15] He might have added that this was a bluff. It was politic for editors and translators of Lucian to feign innocence and pretend not to understand the implications for their own time. Even so they "slipped up" occasionally, lamenting Lucian's unfortunate relevance.

Applied skepticism was taboo in the sixteenth century and remained so into the seventeenth century, when the Groningen professor Cyriacus Lenz grouped Skeptics together with atheists and other disturbers of the peace: *Sceptici, athei, impii, novarum rerum cupientes.*[16] His colleague Martin Schoock was right to note that those who ventured to show an interest in skepticism carefully circumscribed its meaning, "giving it a narrow definition and remaining at the stage of semi-skepticism."[17] In the intellectual milieu of the Renaissance it was unthinkable to take an interest in skepticism except as a historical phenomenon or to defend skepticism except by adding a disclaimer. Thus Coluccio Salutati wrote in a letter to Alidosi Signore d'Imola that skepticism was nothing more than an intellectual stimulant, "for if we want to define it properly, our knowledge is nothing but ra-

tional doubt." Erasmus likewise defended his own skepticism by redefining its meaning. It was distrust, not in the church, but in his own intellectual powers. It confirmed the need for obedience to the church. Lucian, who was made out to be a bête noire by conservative theologians, was misunderstood, Erasmus said. The Greek satirist condemned the arrogance of philosophers and scoffed at the gods. "That is how he gained the title 'atheist'; but it was a name . . . given to him by impious and superstitious [pagans]." In other words, Lucian scoffed at pagan gods, as did every good Christian.[18] When Henri Estienne published a Latin translation of Sextus Empiricus' *Hypotyposes* in 1562, he justified his interest in skepticism in similar terms. "[Skepticism] demonstrates the vanity of all knowledge," he wrote in the preface to the reader. He contrasted the intellectual humility of skeptics with the arrogance of theologians who were playing "censors of divine providence," wanting to confine God to the narrow compass of their understanding. By destroying trust in human knowledge, he said, skepticism encouraged reliance on religious traditions and inspired awe in the divine providence. Gentien Hervet, who published Sextus Empiricus' *Contra mathematicos* in 1569, adopted a similar stand. Skepticism, he said, taught intellectual humility and put scholastic quibblers and Calvinist know-it-alls in their place.[19]

There was safety in presenting skeptical thought in the context of mysticism and fideism, in proceeding from an acknowledgment of the impotence of the human mind to expressions of trust in divine knowledge. Critics suspicious of the humanists' interest in skepticism alleged that such pious talk was merely a front. The humanists were crypto-Pyrrhonists. Jean Visagier, the author of a book of *Hendecasyllables*, entitled one of his poems "Against Lucian's Ape." He called humanists publicizing Lucian's works hypocrites. "If someone is present, who is not of your crowd, . . . you explain why you hate Lucian and want to please only Christ," but when you are among your friends, "you joke about how well you have played the Christian." Visagier's words may have been aimed at Dolet or Rabelais.[20] Similarly, Beza criticized Sebastian Castellio's skepticism and called his defense hypocrisy. "But I say, indeed I am prepared to assert, that your purpose is to impose on the simple-minded." He hinted at Castellio's humanist connections and, like Masson, seems to have regarded skepticism as the philosophy favored by humanists.[21] The same connection is made obliquely by Bucer in an assessment of Johannes Velsius, a potential candidate for teaching at the Strasbourg Gymnasium: "His learning met with everyone's approval, as did his eloquence and polished speech." There were objections, however, to his propensity to argue on both sides of a question (*opiniones pugnantes excutit*) and to attack the authority of standard authors "in the manner of Italian scholars." In other words, Velsius had picked up the *ars dubitandi* from Italian humanists.[22]

In the compass of our study it is pertinent to ask how humanistic skeptics fared in the Reformation debate. Erasmus, Agrippa of Nettesheim, and Castellio, who were clearly identified as skeptics by their contemporaries, deserve our special attention. Participants in the religious debate showed no tolerance for skeptical humanists and saw no useful application for their method. On the contrary, skepticism impeded their purpose, which was the clarification of doctrine. It could not be marshaled in support of a specific interpretation. It could not aid in the process of con-

fessionalization and was therefore rejected and suppressed by both parties to the debate.

The Skepticism of Erasmus

It was in the controversy over free will that Luther referred to Erasmus as a Skeptic doubter and to himself as a Stoic asserter.[23] Did sixteenth-century readers of the controversy recognize the epistemological significance of the polemic and did they regard the skeptical Erasmus as a spokesman of humanism? It is clear that Erasmus' views were generally regarded as paradigmatic. His stature as role model and opinion maker was acknowledged even by his enemies. In 1530 the Louvain theologian Frans Titelmans wrote that Erasmus' name was synonymous with humanism: "It is an established custom in our time to call people concentrating their efforts on [humanistic] studies 'Erasmians,'" he said, "because you appear to be either the leader and patron or the founder of their studies."[24] We may take it for granted, then, that contemporaries saw Erasmus as *the* representative of humanism. We have seen, however, that Erasmus was also addressed as a "theologian" by his contemporaries. It therefore remains to establish his role in the specific context of the controversy with Luther.

Erasmus himself was ambivalent about claiming the title of theologian, but never shy to present himself as a humanist. He did hold a doctorate in theology from the University of Turin, but rarely mentioned it in his writings. Two explanations come to mind for this discretion: the nature of the degree and his well-publicized disdain for theology professors. Erasmus obtained the degree *per saltum*, that is, without fulfilling the usual residence requirements or passing through the regular course of studies. The degree, though valid, was therefore not particularly valuable, especially in the eyes of those who had gone through the rigorous training required at Paris or Louvain. Erasmus' eagerness to obtain a doctorate through extraordinary channels might thus have exposed him to ridicule or at any rate taken the edge off his satirical remarks on professional theologians. Although he engaged in studies that were in the domain of theology, he liked to pose as a simple philologist. The prefaces to his critical New Testament edition (first published 1516) exemplify this strategy. In the dedicatory letter to Pope Leo X he described the task but said nothing about his qualifications for undertaking it. In the preface to the reader, he skirted the question as well. He emphasized the philological dimension of the task, dwelling on the textual and literary criticism it involved. He acknowledged in the most offhand manner that it was not always possible to separate philological explanations from theological exegesis: "Just as those who expound the meaning are sometimes obliged to explain the usage, I too was obliged to unfold the thrust of the meaning while I went about my business of explaining the words."[25] However, critics of the edition zeroed in on this overlap of disciplines and aggressively questioned Erasmus' professional qualifications.[26] As a result he added another preface to the second edition of the New Testament (1519) addressing their concerns. In this apologetic piece, entitled "Against Certain Morose and Captious Critics," he once again retreated behind the excuse that the task at hand was essen-

tially philological. He cited Jerome's statement that there was a difference between the divinely inspired author and the translator who relied on human expertise acquired through language studies: "In that kind of expertise which depends on experience in languages I am neither unschooled nor, I believe, inexperienced." He talked defiantly of his philological skills and meekly of his theological qualifications: "If anyone denies that I am a theologian: I have played the part of the grammarian. . . . if they insist that this task cannot be accomplished except by a theologian, I am the least of the theologians, I have engaged in the lowest function of theology. If no man is a theologian who is surpassed in learning by another, the world will have only one theologian. Everyone has his talents. If no one offers anything better, it is self-evident that I have not wasted my efforts."[27]

In comments on the polemic with Luther, Erasmus was similarly evasive. He acknowledged that he had entered theological territory, but stressed that he had done so unwillingly. He lamented that he had been "turned from a champion of the Muses into a gladiator,"[28] that is, had been obliged to move from his domain proper, literary studies, to the arena of theological disputation. He suggested that this shift in roles was forced on him by his critics: "The first battles were against the study of languages and of Latin literature. I supported such studies in so far as their inclusion might shore up traditional learning, not, as the saying goes, 'to push the old professors off the bridge.' I thought they might serve Christ's glory; I did not want to bring the old paganism back to the modern world. Then, when the outcome of the battle was still in doubt, some monks turned the issue into a question of faith." Thus he was obliged to take on the battle on their terms. Discussing his role in the conflict with Luther in a letter to Andreas Cricius, he again describes his involuntary transformation from humanist to theologian. His original mission had been cultural: "My efforts were directed at taming our Batavia through contact with the humanities." His initiative was not always well received and involved him in hostilities: "Although this matter made me very unpopular, it would nevertheless have succeeded well, had not this fatal storm arisen, which now tosses and disturbs the Christian world." He goes on to describe the purpose of entering into a public debate with Luther: "I published my *Diatribe* because I realized that I could not free myself in any other way from the persistent suspicion [of being Luther's supporter]."[29] It was "to stop the mouths of people who try to persuade princes that I agree in every point with Luther;" "to make clear to the princes that what they do not want to believe is true." In a letter to Melanchthon, Erasmus provides a more detailed rationale. His reason was threefold, he writes. The theologians of Louvain accused him of "infecting that whole region with languages and literature (for this is how they talk). They have persuaded the monks that I am Luther's sworn ally." Secondly, he had been counseled by friends to publish something against Luther to reassure the pope and the princes, and had promised them to do so. Thirdly, Luther had declared that he would spare Erasmus as long as he did not write against him, and "if I keep silent, it will appear that I have an agreement with him not to publish anything."[30]

Returning to the question, whether Erasmus entered the debate with Luther as a humanist or as a theologian, we may conclude that he consciously crossed the line from one field to the other. At the same time, he asserted that his purpose was epideictic or demonstrative rather than exegetical. He drew attention to his method in

the very title of his treatise. It was a *diatribe* (or in Latin, a *collatio*), a collation and comparison of scriptural passages and patristic interpretations.[31] The subject matter was theological; the method humanistic. Demonstration, or *epideixis*, as it was termed in classical handbooks, is a rhetorical rather than a philosophical or theological method. Its purpose is to draw the audience's attention to the author's skill more than to his thought and to the execution of the task more than to the content of the work. Using this technique, Erasmus intended to show, first of all, how one ought to approach doctrinal questions, and, second, that his own approach differed fundamentally from Luther's. In consequence, he hoped, it would be impossible in future to associate him with the reformer or depict him as his forerunner. Erasmus, then, did not attempt to settle the theological question of free will but to give a methodological demonstration. The exercise may be regarded as one of several attempts to impose humanistic concepts on the Reformation debate, attempts that were unsuccessful because they ran counter to the prevailing trend of confessionalization.[32] As such, the polemic was a confrontation of irreconcilable habits of thought, and in the historical view, a battle lost for the cause of humanism.

The procedure Erasmus advocated in the polemic with Luther involved two steps: (1) a rational examination of the evidence on both sides of the question, and if no rational solution presented itself, (2) proceeding to a verdict based on authority and consensus. Luther's method by contrast was to assert doctrine on the basis of a divinely guided personal conviction. The first step of Erasmus' investigation into the concept of free will led to a probable rather than a certain verdict. At this point, the rational investigator would be obliged to suspend judgment.[33] As a believer, however, Erasmus pursued a different path: "I have so little fondness for assertions that I would readily join the ranks of the skeptics," he writes, but as a Catholic he was constrainted to judge doctrinal matters "by the inviolable authority of Scripture and the decrees of the Church."[34] The Catholic Church had affirmed the existence of free will, and, as her obedient son, he accepted the verdict.

The method of arguing on both sides of a question, made prominent by Greek sophists, is adapted here to doctrinal disputation. In the view of the Pyrrhonists, the skeptic hardliners of antiquity, a logical impasse demanded *epoche*, suspension of judgment. The qualified skepticism of the New Academy, exemplified by Cicero, circumvented the difficulties arising from *epoche* by proceeding to judgment on the basis of probability. Scholastic theologians, who used the sic-et-non format, similarly argued on both sides of a question, but their argumentation was not a search for the truth, strictly speaking, but a progressing, through disputation, toward a preconceived "correct" solution. Erasmus' argumentation does not fit the scholastic mold, nor can he be regarded as a skeptic in either of the classical senses. He does not advocate suspension of judgment or judgment based on probability like his classical predecessors, nor does he provide an argued conclusion as did the scholastics. Rather, he admits the insolubility of the question, distances himself from any judgment, and substitutes for his own voice the voice of authority and a decision by consensus. He defines articles of faith accordingly. They are based, he says in a apologia addressed to his Spanish critics, on "unequivocal Scriptural passages"—that is, authority—and on "commonly accepted creeds or universal synods"—that is, consensus. Elsewhere he supplies a similar definition. An article of faith is "that which

the Catholic Church holds without controversy and by a large consensus, such as the doctrines expressly stated in Holy Scripture and in the apostles' creed, to which may be added the decrees of councils properly constituted and following due process."[35] Scholars refer to Erasmus as a "Christian Humanist" to distinguish his brand of humanism from secular or civic versions. In the same vein, I propose to refer to Erasmus' skepticism as "Christian skepticism" to distinguish his brand from the classical antecedents. When he uses skeptical methodology but admits scriptural or church authority and the consensus of the faithful as criteria of judgment, he is clearly modifying a pagan philosophy to bring it in line with Christian thought.

Erasmus' Christian skepticism played a crucial role in shaping his attitude toward Luther and the reformers. He had initially given qualified support to Luther, but changed his tune after 1521, when Luther openly defied authority.[36] Modern historians (and Erasmus' contemporaries) have interpreted this change in various ways. Some regarded his withdrawal of public support as an act of hypocrisy; others saw it as an aspect of his irenicism.[37] Fear for his personal safety and a desire for peace and order may have played a role, but it is preferable to adopt Luther's point of view. He focused on the epistemological import of the polemic with Erasmus. Epistemology is certainly a better reference point and provides a more coherent and satisfactory explanation for Erasmus' attitude toward the reformers than irenicism. Erasmus abhorred doctrinal disputes, not because he loved peace (he was quite contentious in intellectual matters), but because he regarded consensus as an essential criterion of the doctrinal truth. Schism posed a threat to the Christian Skeptic's decision-making process. If papal authority was questioned in principle, if long-standing traditions were abandoned, if consensus was destroyed, the Christian Skeptic was arrested at the stage of *epoche* and paralyzed in his actions.

Luther perfectly understood the epistemological implications of Erasmus' *Diatribe*. In his reply he contrasted Erasmus' reluctance to pass judgment with his own willingness to make assertions, using classical terms of reference.[38] He believed that skeptics must be banished from Christianity; what was needed were "asserters twice as unyielding as the Stoics themselves." He insisted that assertions were a quintessential Christian mode of speaking: "This is how a Christian will speak. . . . I will not only consistently adhere to and assert sacred writings everywhere and in all its parts, but I also wish to be as certain as possible in things that are not vital and that lie outside of Scripture. For what is more miserable than uncertainty?" Conversely, he criticizes Erasmus for wanting "to compare everything, affirm nothing."[39] The polemic with Luther went into a second round with the publication of Erasmus' *Hyperaspistes*. Significantly, Erasmus did not reject the label "skeptic" in this reply to Luther, but clarified its meaning. Skeptics, he said, care about the truth, but do not jump to conclusions. "They do not offer facile definitions and fight for their opinions tooth and claw." Skeptics, he said, "accept as a probability what another accepts as certainty." It is important to note, however, that Erasmus does not rest at this point. The definition "the skeptic accepts as a probability what another accepts as certainty" applies to the Academic Skeptic. The Christian Skeptic is able to overcome the limitations of human reason and convert probability into certainty by using authority and consensus as criteria of the truth. Erasmus therefore continues: "I specifically exempt [from uncertainty] . . . what has been revealed in Sacred Scrip-

ture and what has been handed down by the authority of the Church." He returns to the two criteria, authority and consensus, in the conclusion of his argument: doctrine is based on scriptural authority and "the decrees of the Church, especially those that were published at general councils and are confirmed by the consensus of the Christian people."[40]

Consensus becomes for Erasmus the touchstone of true religion and, conversely, discord the characteristic mark of false doctrine—and this he wishes to be understood not merely as a strategic position or as an aspect of his pacifism or his ecclesiology but as a cornerstone of his epistemology. He makes this point with increasing frequency in references to the reformers. In the dialogue *An Explanation of the Creed* (1533) the catechumen asks how he may recognize the authentic voice of the church among the many sects that claim to be the only genuine interpreters of the Word of God. Erasmus provides this answer: "There are many indications . . . but the foremost is the authority of the ancient synods approved by the lasting consensus of so many centuries and nations."[41] In the same vein, Erasmus declares repeatedly that he cannot join the reformers because they do not manifest the telltale consensus. "If I could convince myself that you are all following the genuine Gospel, I would already be in your camp. But the dissensions among you clearly show that this is not the case," he writes in an apologia addressed to the Strasbourg reformers. In a letter to Conradus Pellicanus he uses similar arguments: "I refuse to depart from the public verdict and the consensus of the Church and am not convinced by a dissenting opinion. You are fighting among yourselves."[42] The Lutherans, he noted sarcastically, were a *disgregata congregatio* and a *dissecta secta*, a disintegregated congregation, a dissected sect.[43] He also returns to the crucial difference between his own approach and that of the reformers, their stoic assertions and his own skepticism: "What they call certain, I consider doubtful. . . . No blame adheres to careful and sober inquiry into specific points. What is dangerous is the commitment to one point of view, which once it occupies the mind, takes away true judgment."[44] Raising doubt, keeping an open mind, and inquiring into both sides of a question are, however, only interim processes for Erasmus, the Christian Skeptic. If they yield no logical conclusion, judgment must be based on authority and consensus, as the *Diatribe* illustrates.

Thus Erasmus' dispute with Luther was theological, but his approach was "untheological," a point, incidentally, that was raised by Spanish inquisitors examining his works. They conceded that Erasmus' opinions were not heterodox, but admonished him "to write in a theological manner, when dealing with theological subjects."[45] It did not escape notice, then, that Erasmus approached theological questions in a rhetorical style, that is, like a typical humanist. His *Hyperaspistes* should be read as a justification for applying the humanistic *ars dubitandi* to a doctrinal issue, just as the apologiae of his New Testament edition were justifications for applying humanistic philology to biblical studies. In both areas, the use of humanistic methods resulted in casting doubt on established authorities and opinions. Confessionalism, however, carried the day. The need for clear answers and the discipline and order they promised were powerful inducements in an age racked by war and dissent. Luther offered the bedrock of *claritas Scripturae*. Skepticism, even in its modified

form that allowed for institutional authority and human consensus, could not match the solace of conviction.

We turn now to the question whether participants in the Reformation debate recognized Erasmus' method as essentially humanistic and understood the epistemological point of the *Diatribe*. An incisive comment can be found in a letter of the Augsburg reformer Urbanus Rhegius to Oecolampadius:

> I am sorry for Erasmus. If he had stayed true to his vocation he would have rightly been regarded a great man, for he restored to its pristine splendor texts that had been corrupt for many centuries on account of our ignorance of languages. But when he allied himself with the papists, he attempted what was beyond his strength. Even our enemies reluctantly admit as much when they read that amazing *Diatribe* (or *Collatio*), in which he takes the opinions of certain scholastics, adds verbal bombast, and transforms them into Erasmian opinions. He wrestles anxiously but does not succeed, and either reveals his ignorance of Scripture or impiously disguises it. . . . How amusing (indeed almost a Scotist achievement) to see the famous Erasmus who always angrily declaimed against the distinctions of the scholastics, . . . contrive four-part distinctions.[46]

Urbanus, then, recognizes the methodological significance of the *Diatribe*. He sees Erasmus as a theologian manqué, who spoiled the scholastic sic-et-non method by decking it out with humanistic rhetoric, and he wants to confine Erasmus to the rhetorical milieu proper. He is not impressed with his sortie into theology and depicts him as ineptly and inappropriately transferring a doctrinal question to the "Erasmian" domain, that is, the domain of humanistic rhetoric. Rhegius had no use for Erasmus' skepticism or his method of argumentation.

Melanchthon reacted in a more oblique, but also more carefully argued, manner to Erasmus' use of the *ars dubitandi*. Timothy Wengert, who has recently examined the relationship between the two men, notes that Melanchthon objected to what he regarded as Erasmus' rhetorical tricks, his "struggles over words" and his use of "human reason." He shows furthermore that Melanchthon's *Dissertatio* and *Scholia* on Colossians, published in 1527, contained a rejection of Erasmus' methodology, that is, criticism of his failure to apply dialectical reasoning to doctrinal questions and use it to arrive at cogent conclusions.[47]

Luther himself continued to disparage Erasmus' skepticism. It is remarkable, in fact, how focused on this point his criticism of Erasmus remains over the years. Almost every mention of his name is followed by a reference to his epistemology, describing him as a skeptic doubter or, in the peculiar terminology of the sixteenth century, a noncommittal "Epicurean" and Lucianic scoffer. In the *Bondage of Free Will*, Luther had voiced the suspicion that his adversary "in his heart cherishes Lucian or another porker in the Epicurean herd, who himself does not believe in God and secretly laughs at those who believe and profess God. Permit us to be asserters keen on and delighting in assertions; and remain a champion of your Skeptics and Academics until Christ enlightens you. The Holy Spirit is no Skeptic." A decade later, he reflects on the polemic in a letter to Nicolaus Amsdorf. He had deliberately linked Erasmus with "the views of Epicurus, Lucian, and the Skeptics," he said, "to make him take a more decided stand in this case; but I made no headway." Erasmus

was still using the same method. His recently published *Catechismus* "had only one purpose, to make the catechumen doubt and suspect the doctrines of faith." Such a method was intolerable. "One must not put up with this ambivalence but give clear-cut judgment . . . . if he speaks like a Lucian, he will be judged like a Lucian. We may play with ambivalent words in other, frivolous matters—nuts, apples, pennies, and other things treasured by children and fools—but in serious matters of religion and state we must make every effort to avoid ambivalence like the devil. But our King Ambivalent sits on his throne secure in his ambivalent words." Luther wanted nothing to do with Erasmus' "flexible and slippery rhetoric."[48]

Erasmus' method of raising doubts was noted and rejected by Catholic apologists as well. Alberto Pio, Count of Carpi, a respected scholar at the Papal Court and, after the Sack of Rome, living in exile in France, had grave reservations about Erasmus' method. He politely praised Erasmus for tackling Luther, but felt that he had "dealt more gently with the madman than the subject itself and the madness of this stubborn heretic demanded; indeed, you seem to be indulgent with him and even flatter him. Pardon my frankness when I say that I and many others consider your restraint inappropriate, inept, and timid." He exhorted Erasmus to throw caution to the wind, "disregard all reasons that would hold you back from this duty and . . . sharpen your pen against Luther and write what is worthy of Erasmus: not in a covert, convoluted and ambiguous manner, not in slippery but in direct language, not with restraint but with passion."[49] In other words, Pio wants Erasmus to be assertive. While the Italian scholar concentrates on the style of Erasmus' presentation, the Louvain theologian Jacques Masson focuses more clearly on his methodology. He expresses strong disapproval of Erasmus' "attempt to place the Lutheran question among matters that are ambiguous, that remain to be proven and can be disputed on both sides." Doctrine, Masson insisted, was not a matter "that can be called in doubt. What has been handed down must be defended with our life."[50] Both Catholic apologists and reformed theologians thus agreed on the necessity of asserting one's beliefs.

While theologians objected to Erasmus' method, humanists showed a general appreciation for his approach. They congratulated him on his civility, but showed only a dim awareness of the epistemological underpinnings of his forbearance. Erasmus got kudos, for example, from the jurist Ulrich Zasius, who remarked on the "great difference in spirit: Erasmus is discreet as far as possible; Luther immodest, indeed full of impudent bragging; the latter creates enmities, strife, envy, anger, conflict, divisions, unpopularity, war; the former peace, gentleness, benignity, goodness, faith, meekness." Commenting more specifically on Erasmus' method, Zasius shows an appreciation for what he terms *temperamentum* (accommodation or adjustment). He notes that Erasmus' purpose is not "to prove his position but to show that contradictory passages in Scripture require *temperamentum*, just as he himself seems to me to have dealt with the implacable quarrels surrounding this matter in an accommodating manner (*temperasse*) that is praiseworthy. Luther, he says, replied in a caviling and petty manner, making inappropriate connections and mixing up passages that make diverse points. "His work is full of unbearable insults, whereas Erasmus composed his *Diatribe* in a very modest style."[51] In references to Erasmus Zasius uses terminology that has a certain philosophical flavor, but in his description of

Luther's reply he limits himself to stylistic terms of reference. It is not clear, therefore, whether he fully recognized the epistemological significance of the controversy. We find a similar mixture of terms also in Paul Volz's remarks on the polemic. He employs the language of literary criticism, but occasionally resorts to philosophical usage. In his comments on the *Diatribe*, the antiquarian, who later became a Lutheran preacher, declared his preference for Erasmus' *temperatura*, his willingness to compromise, over Luther's adversarial approach.[52] The remarks of Boniface Amerbach, a personal friend and loyal supporter of Erasmus, are restricted to matters of style: "[Luther] flashes his sword at Erasmus in a book full of hatred, spewing out nothing but insults." He reports that Erasmus' partisans "say that it was imprudent of Luther to climb into the ring with an adversary who surpasses him in eloquence, intelligence, and erudition." The Constance canon Johann Botzheim, to whom Amerbach's words are addressed, agrees. He, too, concentrated his remarks on the style in which the controversy had been carried on. He described Luther as foulmouthed and raving.[53] Erasmus' humanist friends, then, reacted with sympathy but skirted the epistemological angle, perhaps because they did not wish to give currency to the image of Erasmus as a skeptic, a label that could be troublesome.

Although the polemic with Luther contains the most trenchant expression of Erasmian skepticism, it must be read in conjunction with his famous satire, *The Praise of Folly*. Folly's speech, which presents Erasmus' *philosophia Christi* in literary form, adds an important dimension to his concept of Christian skepticism. While the *Diatribe* presents a rational solution to the Skeptic's dilemma—reliance on consensus and authority—*The Praise of Folly* offers a fideistic alternative. Folly's speech is a rant against doctrinaire thinking. In the role of the social critic, she attacks the foolish confidence of know-it-alls, and especially pedantic theologians. In the role of philosopher-theologian, she deprecates reliance on human knowledge and praises "Christian fools" who, aware of their intellectual impotence, trust in the wisdom of God. The corollary of her denial of human knowledge is fideism, which appears as a companion of skepticism also in the writings of other skeptics, notably Agrippa and Castellio.

The Skepticism of Agrippa of Nettesheim

Agrippa of Nettesheim, a controversial figure in his own day and something of a conundrum still, has been labeled a skeptic on the basis of his paradoxical work *On the Vanity of All Sciences*, composed in 1526 and first published in 1530.[54] This invective against human knowledge aroused the ire of theologians in his own time because of its unvarnished criticism of the church and was formally censured by the faculties of theology at Louvain and Paris. The preface of the *Vanity* shows that Agrippa anticipated a hostile reception. His catalog of potential enemies and their contemplated acts of vengeance is a Rabelaisian tour de force. The "barbarous Lullist will take away my reason with his absurd words and solecisms," he writes; "the hooded monks will denounce me from the pulpits," "the doctors of the Sorbonne will issue a censure sealed with the great seal," the Pythagorean "will calculate unlucky numbers for me," the prostitute "will infect me with the French pox," and the artist "will

depict me looking uglier than Thersites." The tone of the introduction containing this list is farcical, but like Erasmus' *Folly*, which may well have furnished the inspiration, Agrippa's *Vanity* concludes on a serious note. The purpose of his attack on the sciences, Agrippa explains, is twofold: to counter the arrogance of learned men, who disdain the Bible because of its simple style and lack of scholastic proofs, "because it is merely corroborated by faith;" and to protest the intellectual stranglehold of theology professors who rob students of academic freedom by holding them to the tenets of Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and Albertus Magnus.[55] Agrippa's explanation rests on two premises: one is antirational, suggesting that faith or revelation is superior to scholarly inquiry; the other is antidoctrinaire, suggesting that all tenets should be open to discussion. The former is indebted to mysticism; the latter has skeptical undertones.

The main section of Agrippa's book consists of a hundred short chapters, each devoted to discrediting an *ars*—an "art" in the comprehensive sense conveyed by the Latin term. This includes academic disciplines, such as grammar, poetry, and moral philosophy; pseudosciences such as soothsaying and magic; mock "arts" such as pimping and prostitution; skills such as agriculture, hunting, and cooking; and vocations such as monasticism. Some of the chapters (for example, those on feast days and ceremonies) cannot be regarded as comments on "arts" from any point of view, but follow in loose sequence on the chapter dealing with religion. The sequence of the chapters and the associations created by their arrangement are amusing and, in some cases, provocative. The chapter on dancing, for example, is followed by chapters on gladiators, actors, and orators, whose profession is thus turned into a kind of dance performance. The chapter on monastic orders is followed by one on prostitution, since (Agrippa argues) priests in antiquity were initiated into the sacred rites of the phallic god Priapus, "and in our church, too, there is a tradition that anyone who lacks testicles cannot be pope. It is forbidden to ordain eunuchs and impotent men and castrated men as priests, and we can see clearly that wherever there are magnificent churches and colleges of priests and monks, brothels are nearby." Most of the chapters contain a historical abstract of the subject at hand. This approach gives Agrippa an opportunity to display his encyclopedic learning, for, as he says: "To be skilled in only one area is no great thing . . . one would have that in common with weavers, tailors, and cooks. A man is the more learned the less material he is ignorant of."[56] The point of the arguments in each chapter is to discredit the art in question by demonstrating that it is not based on reliable criteria, does not produce certain knowledge, and may yield objectionable results. This prepares the ground for Agrippa's overall conclusion: knowledge belongs to God alone.

Although the chapters of Agrippa's book ostensibly deal with all disciplines, he points his finger primarily at clerics and theologians. Many of the chapters end up with critical references to the established church and remarks sympathetic to the efforts of the reformers. And while his "attacks" on other arts are executed in a humorous or satirical spirit, his observations on the church do not invite laughter. They tend to be caustic rather than bantering, shocking rather than amusing. Similarly Agrippa's criticism of the scholastic method is entirely sober in tone and reveals the serious philosophical purpose of the work: to demonstrate the futility of the human quest for absolute truth. The first principles on which the dialecticians base

their proofs are "fragile," Agrippa says, because they rely on human rules and experience, both of which are fallible. Dialectical proofs are therefore not cogent: "Of what use, then, is dialectic? What is the result of this 'scientific' demonstration which is based on rules and experience, to which we are supposed to agree out of necessity as if they were known principles?" The doubts raised here about the merit of dialectical reasoning are reinforced in the next chapter, entitled "Sophistry." "Since there is no statement that does not admit of another to the contrary and there is no argument that cannot be overturned by another to the contrary, human beings cannot come to a scientific result and to a knowledge of the truth through dialectical disputations." Although Agrippa poses as a skeptic here, he does not adopt the resolutions suggested by Pyrrhonists or Academics, that is, he does not suggest suspending judgment or proceeding to judgment on the basis of probability. Instead he counsels tolerance of a variety of religious practices and reliance on faith.[57] The theological truth cannot be discovered through rational processes, but "through faith alone," he says, using the reformers' catchphrase, *sola fide*.[58] He allows that dialectic may be useful as an intellectual exercise and an aid in developing mental discipline, but "I cannot see what it can contribute to theological speculation, whose highest form of dialectic is prayer." What knowledge human beings need for their salvation cannot be found "in the schools of the philosophers or the training grounds of the sophists; rather go into yourselves and you will understand everything . . . withdraw into yourselves, you who are eager for the truth, withdraw from the fogginess of human traditions and acquire true light." Knowledge comes through "faith and prayer, not lengthy studies, . . . he who follows many authors, errs with many authors. Everything [necessary for salvation] is contained in one book, the Holy Bible." Thus, Agrippa's skepticism ends, not in *epoche*, but in mysticism and fideism.[59]

While contemporaries labeled Agrippa a skeptic, modern scholars have debated the appropriateness of this designation. Agrippa himself denied that he supported unqualified skepticism, asserting that it was "despised and rejected by all the best philosophers and theologians."[60] He distinguished "two kinds of sciences." One concerned the knowledge of God; the other knowledge of human matters. He was skeptical, in the strict sense of the word, only about the latter, for within the compass of human knowledge, "there is no subject that cannot be most eloquently argued on both sides and about which one cannot proffer a probable opinion;" knowledge of God, however, was certain, because it does not rely on knowledge but on faith.[61] The clearest statement on the relationship between the two kinds of knowledge and the uncertainty of human investigations can be found in his treatise *De originali peccato*: "For reason must not disturb faith but must be subordinated to it; nor must faith succumb to reason . . . . indeed we must not debate about the divine but be firm in faith and hope. About created things, however, we are allowed to philosophize, debate, and draw conclusions with the help of reason; yet we must not put faith or hope in them . . . for knowledge that is corroborated by the discourse of reason or the variegated experience of our senses may corrupt the judgment of the mind."[62] Similar statements on the fallacy of the senses, reminiscent of Sextus Empiricus' outline of Pyrrhonic skepticism, can be found in chapter 7 of the *Vanity*: "For since all of our senses often deceive us, they certainly cannot prove that an experience is real. . . . Is it not clear therefore that to our senses the path to the truth is blocked? Con-

sequently, all deductions and sciences that are based on the senses themselves will be uncertain, erroneous, and fallacious."[63] However, Agrippa never advocates suspension of judgment as a solution to the problems of daily life. In the human sphere, where uncertainty is regarded as inevitable, near-certainty is an acceptable substitute for the unobtainable truth. In divine matters human beings may aspire to certainty, not through their own intellectual power, but through divine inspiration.

Agrippa's epistemology shaped his attitude toward the institutional church and made him suspect in the eyes of Catholic theologians. Three features—corollaries of his skepticism—appeared particularly troublesome. First, Agrippa's belief in the fallacy of human judgment led him to plead for greater tolerance in religious disputes and to protest the treatment accorded to Luther by Catholic censors. He invites the theologians to remember that they "are human and can err." They should therefore have treated Luther with greater forbearance. If they had acted with restraint, he says, "they would not now have to fear heretics and schismatics, whom they persecuted when they were still catholic and orthodox . . . and drove into the camp of schismatics and heretics." "If Luther had been treated with greater civility, the fire could have been extinguished in the beginning, when he did not fight the Roman church but the unbearable abuses of the monastic indulgence hawkers and the tyranny of the prelates, but they so belaboured him that he finally stood up against the Church herself. If they had left him in peace, he would probably have preferred to keep silent." He noted that he had written the *Vanity* in a spirit of tolerance, *cum patientia oppositi*, and had argued from probability rather than certainty, *citra veritatis regulam probabiliter declamare*.[64] Such pleas for tolerance and, in particular, remarks sympathetic to Luther naturally exposed Agrippa to charges of heterodoxy. Second, approximating Erasmus' Christian skepticism, Agrippa adopted consensus and tradition as criteria of the doctrinal truth. Like Erasmus, he distinguished between doctrinal questions settled on the basis of clear scriptural passages or the decrees of the church and doubtful matters awaiting an official decision: "The man who doubts matters still under discussion among orthodox writers is not for this reason a heretic, since the authority of the church has not yet forbidden us to doubt about them, nor is there a consensus of opinion by all doctors on these matters."[65] Third, Agrippa combined skepticism with mysticism. He explained that one may arrive at the correct interpretation of the Bible in two ways: through divinely inspired prophets or, secondhand, by interpreting the words of the prophets. The latter method used "a path midway between the [scholastic method] and prophetic vision, namely an approximation of the truth attained by a purified mind" (*adaequatio veritatis cum intellectu nostro purgato*). The mind purified could not match the discernment of divinely inspired prophets, "but a door is opened to make us more certain. This certainty rests on perception proportionate to our intellectual ability and the beam shining forth from the inner sanctum, which is more enlightening than philosophical demonstrations." It was a form of understanding acquired "not with our external eyes and ears, but with our superior senses. We shall seize on the truth emerging from the core of sacred literature, with the veil removed and its face revealed, more readily than those who have seen it veiled with their corporeal eyes."[66] In describing the quest for the eternal truth, Agrippa uses the terminology of mysticism. For him,

doctrinal truth and knowledge of God cannot be found through philosophical or scientific investigation but is the result of faith and mystical contemplation.

Agrippa did not challenge specific Catholic doctrines, but his ideas were geared toward a personal religious experience and at odds with organized religion. He himself refused to acknowledge this difficulty. He admitted to being outspoken but denied that this could be construed as impious: "Many people have taken offense because I speak the truth. They find me bothersome because I am highly inquisitive (*curiosa nimis inquisitione*)." True, he might have spoken "more moderately or in a more circumspect manner or with greater erudition." Perhaps he had erred in some matters, he said, but he was nevertheless a catholic: *me catholicum profiteor*.[67]

In defending his writings against allegations of heterodoxy, Agrippa took a leaf out of Erasmus' book. Like Erasmus (whose run-in with the Louvain theologians he specifically mentions) Agrippa denied that he was making assertions: "I would like you to regard my views as being tendered in a spirit of modesty. Do not think that I wish to reprehend those who hold a different view or that I am making insolent claims for myself."[68] He draws attention to the literary genre of the *Vanity*. It was a *declamatio*, a piece of rhetoric. "In this genre matters are said or raised or discussed plausibly. They are presented as probable or laughable; they may even be violently distorted or transformed. [My critic] regards them as statements to be defended at my peril or else retracted with embarrassment, in obedience to the stern dictates of the theologians." Agrippa returns to this point again with the argument that the writer of a declamation

> does not render judgment, does not establish doctrine, but speaks according to the rules of a declamation, saying some things in jest, others in earnest, some wittily, others in a severe tone; sometimes uttering his own opinion, at other times that of others. Sometimes he says things that are true, at other times things that are false or dubious. In some places he disputes, elsewhere he admonishes. He does not everywhere criticize or teach or make assertions; nor does he necessarily give his own opinion. He adduces much that is not valid in order to invite rebuttal and resolution and sometimes argues on opposite sides of a question. If the censor cannot distinguish between these modes, he cannot but render a foolish judgment on them.[69]

Agrippa's disclaimer echoes Erasmus' defense of his *Praise of Marriage*, a declamation sharply criticized in 1517 by Briard of Ath, rector of the Universiy of Louvain. Ath regarded the piece an attack on clerical celibacy and declared that it smacked of heresy. In a published response Erasmus pointed out that "declamations deal with imaginary subjects for the purpose of exercizing one's ingenuity." "Whoever professes to give a declamation disclaims all responsibility for the opinions stated." Critics ought to be able to distinguish between literary genres. Apparently, however, they were ignorant of the nature of a declamation. It was not fair that Erasmus "should be made to suffer because of someone else's ignorance."[70]

Some of the parallels between Erasmus' and Agrippa's epistemology may be regarded as manifestations of humanistic zeitgeist; others, particularly the apologetic strategy, are conscious imitations on Agrippa's part. He repeatedly tried to attract Erasmus' interest, but the Dutch scholar remained aloof. Between 1531 and 1533 Agrippa wrote a series of letters asking for Erasmus' endorsement of his *Vanity*. Its

purpose and execution was, after all, reminiscent of Erasmus' *Praise of Folly*. Like it, Agrippa's work dealt with a serious philosophical and theological subject—human knowledge, and specifically, knowledge of God—treating it in a literary rather than an academic manner, in the rhetorical rather than the philosophical tradition. Erasmus ignored some of Agrippa's letters altogether and answered others briefly and in a noncommittal manner. He expressed only polite interest and promised to read the book as soon as time permitted, pleading ill health and a heavy workload. At this time Erasmus was engaged in a battle with the theologians of Paris. The faculty of theology had published sweeping censures of his works; Erasmus replied with a detailed justification of the passages criticized. No doubt he recognized a certain kinship between his own and Agrippa's ideas, but was unwilling to expose himself to further ill will by supporting a controversial work. In his last known letter to Agrippa, dated April 1533, he was entirely candid. He had asked his secretary to read the *Vanity* to him because his health did not permit him to do so himself. "I like your dynamic style and eloquence, and I do not see why the monks are so indignant," he wrote. "You lambast the bad and praise the good, but they want to hear only praise. I give you the same advice that I have given before: if at all possible, extricate yourself from this quarrel." He reminded Agrippa of Louis Berquin's fate. The French humanist had dared to defy the Paris theologians and had paid for it with his life. "If you cannot avoid fighting them, mind that you fight from well fortified quarters and don't fall into their hands. Take care especially not to mix me up in this business. I have enough ill will to bear already. This matter will burden me further and will harm rather than help you. I asked Berquin the same thing, and he gave me his promise, but he reneged on it, indulging his own fancy rather than taking my advice. You see what comes of it. . . . you cannot overcome the theologians and monks, even if you have a tighter case than St. Paul himself."[71]

Like Erasmus, Agrippa suggested that there was a conspiracy against humanists and that he was victimized because he was a humanist. The theologians hated liberal studies and hoped to rid themselves of the humanists by accusing them of heresy. "The scholastic theologians have closed rank and persecute the beauty of eloquence and the knowledge of languages with such hatred that they want to root them out as if they were the reason for all schisms and heresies." In his opinion, the theologians were trying "to recoup the losses they had suffered in the battle against Erasmus' *Folly*" by attacking him next. He saw himself as Erasmus' heir apparent and was willing to be a martyr to the humanistic cause. He was, however, suffering from delusions of grandeur, for there was no corresponding challenge in the writings of his critics. Notorious rather than renowned, Agrippa could not fill Erasmus' shoes.[72] The respective censures of the two men's works by the Paris theologians show the difference in their stature. The faculty clearly considered Erasmus eponymous with humanism. They therefore extended their censure beyond his works to the movement he represented. In the conclusion of their verdict on his writings, they targetted not only Erasmus, but rebuked all "who believe that whatever is written in a splendid style is true and what is written in a simple and plain style is false . . . and those who think that knowing Greek and Hebrew amounts to perfect and consummate theology, although those who know languages but are not otherwise trained in the discipline of theology must be regarded as philologists (*grammatici*)

not theologians." Writings such as Erasmus' "may be neat, but they are not without the poison of the condemned teachings of Wycliffe and Luther." In other words, the Paris theologians used Erasmus' works as a paradigm for biblical humanism. They did not honor Agrippa with the same attention. Their condemnation of his work was succinct. In one short paragraph they stated that Agrippa's book "greatly favours Lutheran doctrine. It contains much against the veneration of images in churches, feast days and church ceremonies, and blasphemes against the authors of the sacred canon. It must therefore be publicly burned."[73] Erasmus, then, was censured as a humanist; Agrippa, merely as a heterodox individual.

The Skepticism of Sebastian Castellio

In the Reformation debate the humanistic *ars dubitandi* came under attack in both the Catholic and the Protestant camp as a method that did not suit the religious debate and impeded the process of confessionalization. The experiences of Erasmus and Agrippa exemplify the resistence of Catholic theologians to forms of skepticism.[74] Castellio's difficulties illustrate the incompatibility of skepticism with the reformed doctrine.[75]

Castellio (1515–1563) was born in Savoy and studied in France, but at the age of thirty he settled in Basel. He turned away from Catholicism after witnessing the cruel treatment of Huguenots as a student in Lyon. He moved to Geneva in 1540 and was appointed rector of the Collège de Rive by Calvin. Soon, however, the two men had a falling out. On Castellio's request Calvin provided him with a letter of reference, in which he expressed respect for Castellio's integrity and his dedication to teaching, but did not conceal their doctrinal differences. He noted with indignation that Castellio had been unwilling to accede to his teaching authority and instead had insisted on following his own conscience. Castellio later mocked Calvin's inflexibility: "This man is a heretic, you say. . . . But what has he done? Something horrible. What? Is he a murderer? An adulterer? A thief? No, none of these. What then was his horrible crime? Does he not believe in Christ or in the holy Scriptures? Oh, yes, he does—so firmly that he would rather die than not persevere in his belief. But he does not understand them, that is, his interpretation differs from that of our professors who are called 'the assembled church'. That is a capital crime and must be expiated with a fiery death."[76] He disapproved of Calvinist strong-arm techniques: "If anyone disagrees with their interpretations, institutions, and ceremonies, they put him in chains on the very same day, at the earliest possible time. Then, in chains, he argues and defends himself, and if he does not agree with them and does not go against his own convictions, that is, if he is not prepared to lie, he must die . . . or certainly go into exile."[77] Castellio had turned away from the Catholic church because of its treatment of dissenters. "I only wish the same violent enforcement did not prevail today [in Geneva], for I see men . . . who obtrude their interpretations, which are often false, on their disciples as if they were oracles."[78]

Castellio's published polemics against Calvin suggest that the break between the two men was predicated not merely on specific doctrinal points but on more profound epistemological differences. Castellio denied the clarity of Scripture and

therefore pleaded for tolerance of interpretations diverging from the prevalent orthodoxy. "Since [God's word in Scripture] is obscure and handed down to us through enigmas which have been disputed now for more than a thousand years and since these matters cannot be settled . . . we must take care lest we crucify the innocent Christ together with the thieves, whom we rightly crucify."[79] Calvinists, Castellio observed, were as authoritarian as Catholics, who terrified believers and kept them "from inquiring, not to say from doubting."[80] In the wake of Michael Servetus' execution in Geneva, Castellio again commented on the matter of doctrinal certainty, insisting that the Bible was obscure on the points raised by Servetus. There was room for doubt, he said, for no one was "so demented that he would die for the sake of denying the obvious."[81] Castellio's plea for toleration was the logical extension of his insistence on the obscurity of the Bible.

In 1544 Castellio left Geneva for Basel, where he worked for the printer Johannes Oporinus until he was appointed professor of Greek at the university in 1553. Castellio's main treatise on skepticism, *De arte dubitandi et confidendi, ignorandi et sciendi* (On the Art of Doubting and Trusting, Not Knowing and Knowing), remained unpublished during his lifetime.[82] In it he advocates an epistemology that is fundamentally at odds with Calvin's efforts to establish enlightenment of the elect as the incontrovertible criterion for the doctrinal truth. He offers an alternative to Erasmus' reliance on consensus and Agrippa's fideism, by positing Scripture and reason as the twin sources of religious truth.[83] He begins his work with the ambitious announcement that he will present an "art by which one can stand firm in the midst of the tide of dissensions lashing the church today, and by which one can find certain truth." For Castellio, then, as for Erasmus and Agrippa, epistemology played a key role in the Reformation debate. Castellio takes his departure from natural insights, principles "that are manifest to all people and cannot be denied even by those who are ignorant of or deny the Sacred Scriptures." He then seeks to corroborate these principles with testimony from Scripture. This "conjunction of Christ and religion with nature and reason . . . will demonstrate which side must be followed in religious controversies." Some teachings of Scripture were clear, he said, others obscure and even "absurd or seemingly incongruous with the majesty of God . . . or contradictory."[84] As a first step Castellio proposes a typically humanistic remedy: textual criticism. "God never promised to guide the hands of scribes, so that they would never err in copying Sacred Scripture." Some obscurities, then, could be cleared up by a skilled philologist. To deal with the remaining difficulties or discrepancies, which were inherent in the original scriptural text, one must evaluate the authority of the passage in question. Castellio distinguishes three levels of authority: first, passages that draw on *patefactio*, divine revelation; second, passages that draw on *cognitio*, human knowledge based on experience acquired firsthand or accepted on the authority of "trustworthy persons;" and third, passages that contain *doctrina*, human precepts and rational arguments. When the biblical author was speaking as a result of *patefactio*, his words must be accepted as the absolute truth; any contradiction or absurdity in his words was merely apparent and the result of the reader's lack of perception. Scriptural passages representing *patefactio* must be distinguished from historical narrative and reasoned argumentation, which evinced the apostles' human *doctrina*, and were therefore fallible. Such passages need not be taken for the ab-

solute truth. If there were discrepancies among them, readers should not be unduly concerned with reconciling them in every detail, but approach them with *aequitas*, open-mindedness, and be content with noting broad agreement.[85] Castellio anticipated objections to his system of gradation from critics afraid that it would undermine not only the authority of certain passages but of the entire Bible. He agreed that the proposed distinctions carried a risk, but insisted on the integrity of scholarly investigation: "Even if there is a risk, what I say is no less true." It was certainly not his purpose to question the authority of the Bible but to show the limitations of human knowledge. It must be admitted that the accounts of the evangelists could not always be reconciled, and that certain scriptural passages were not unequivocal. In such cases doubt was permissible: "To regard as certain what is doubtful and to entertain no doubts about them is imprudent and fraught with danger." God wanted some parts of Scripture to remain obscure, "so that there may be room for human effort."[86]

In nondoctrinal matters, Castellio strongly endorsed reliance on sense perception and reason. When valid arguments could be adduced on both sides of a question, Scripture was the touchstone, however. The two criteria—human judgment and Scripture—should preferably be in agreement, "for what rests on both is firmer than what rests on either." Some things, however, are *supra sensum*, beyond our senses. For example, when Christ says "This is my body," he speaks of a matter that is beyond our sense experience, and we must "respect God's Son sufficiently to believe his word." Such cases are not to be confused with what is *contra sensum*, against our senses. Unless we are dealing with God's own word, we should not be asked to go against our senses. Those who want us to discard sense perception and believe what goes against it "either close their own eyes to reason, in which case we must not follow blind guides, or they impose their own arbitrary judgment." Castellio praises reason in the humanistic vein, as a spark of divine reason, "God's daughter." It existed before Scripture and is eternal like Christ who is Logos, that is, word and reason, for "reason is a kind of internal and eternal speech, the speech and language of truth." Thus Abraham was able to live a pious life prior to Moses' proclamation of the Ten Commandments, and the moral judgment of pagans was often in agreement with Christian values, for they were guided by the natural light of reason, "the guide, discoverer, and interpreter of the truth which, if anything in profane or sacred letters is obscure or corrupted by time, has the ability to correct it or at any rate casts doubt on it until the truth shines forth or until further pronouncements can be made about an uncertain matter." As a humanist Castellio believed in the power of the human mind to discern the truth, insofar as it lay in the purvey of sense perception and rational argumentation. "Human reason and sense perception were not impaired by Adam's fall," he insisted.[87]

In the second, unfinished part of the book, Castellio explores specific theological problems. His discussion of the nature of the Trinity illustrates the type of skepticism he advocates. He applies the method suggested in the first book: "We pose a problem and first discuss it with rational arguments. Then we join reason with evidence from Sacred Scripture." The result of this type of investigation is the repudiation of false opinion and the substitution of *aequiora*, "more prudent views," but this procedure will only be effective with readers who "accept and allow words to be subservient to things rather than things to words." The emphasis on common sense and

common language conventions is also evident in another section of the work, which is formulated as a disputation between Athanasius (that is, quotations from the Athanasian creed) and an interlocutor, whose positions resemble those of Michael Servetus. The interlocutor challenges Athanasius' assertion that there are three persons in the Trinity, but only one God. This goes against language conventions. "Grammar, dialectic, and arithmetic have taught me that three are three and one is one, and if there are three, they are not one, and if there is one there are not three, and those who deny this seem to me as unteachable as beasts."[88]

Castellio's skepticism is multifaceted. Like Erasmus and Agrippa, he presents several solutions to the dilemma posed by the limitations of the human mind in a parallel rather than a hierarchical or sequential order. One channel of thought leads him to embrace concord and consensus, both as a Christian virtue and as a criterion of the truth. Erasmus instructed the catechumen to look for consensus as the distinguishing mark of the true church. Castellio uses the same touchstone. He scoffs at the Calvinists, who for all their learning "cannot even achieve consensus among themselves," a sentiment that also appears in his dedicatory preface to the Latin Bible: "If the Spirit of God is one, if truth is one, those in whom the Spirit resides must be one and be of one mind concerning spiritual matters." When doctrinal matters admitted doubt, no human investigation could establish the truth; rather one must remain in awe of God's mysteries and await the beam of his enlightenment: "God opens up his mysteries to those who are in awe of him." Faced with the question "If doctrine is uncertain and in suspense . . . how will the true church be known?" Castellio answers "through charity, a precept that leaves no doubt . . . even if some questions remain unresolved—those concerning the Trinity, predestination, election, and so forth, for which men are regarded heretics even though many pious men have known nothing about them."[89]

At times, Castellio's skepticism takes an anti-intellectual turn. Because Scripture cannot be fully understood through "arts and sciences, human industry, memory, or skill" and perfect knowledge is taught only by the Spirit, God may in fact have vested it in uneducated men, "lest we arrogate anything to our own erudition and the power of the arts" and "to confound the wise."[90] Castellio therefore lashed out against scholastic theology and its *sic et non* method: "Your skills . . . hold back the light of the truth, just as clouds and mists are seen to delay slightly the rising daylight. . . . You make your position plausible before inexperienced people by your skill which teaches you to speak plausibly on any subject, on both sides of the question. You are so well equipped with this skill, that a person can hardly phrase or manage anything so well that you could not give it a twisted interpretation. But beware of abusing the brilliant talents which God has given you for other purposes!"[91] He repeats this accusation in *De calumnia*: "[Theologians] have learned the art of disputing, which they call dialectic, the art of arguing plausibly on both sides of any proposed issue, that is, of defending or attacking truth. In this art they have been trained from youth on in their schools. Then, when it comes to taking up their office or teaching the people about the gospel, they defend the position they favour using this art. They act just like a soldier trained in the military art, who sides with the prince he favours or from whom he receives the higher pay."[92] Castellio rejected the pretensions of professional theologians. Their *curiositas*, or desire to investigate doc-

trine minutely, was at variance with the Christian simplicity of the apostolic age. "If anyone with a more acute mind can understand what I and people similar to me cannot understand, it is well and I don't begrudge them their understanding, but to demand that everyone possess such mental acumen would mean—in my opinion at least—excluding the majority of people from the path of salvation." This could not be in accordance with God's plans.[93]

Castellio's emphasis on the limitations of human knowledge exposed him to the charge of being hostile to all learning and education. To defend himself against this accusation, he qualified his views more carefully. He explained that he had been in his younger days a *Musopatagus*, an applauder of the Muses, but as a mature man felt embarrassed by his youthful enthusiasm for such frivolous studies:

> You [Calvin] say that I am arrogant, declaring liberal arts and even the study of theology inane and frivolous. . . . [I admit] that I have often taught and still am teaching that the humanities are just that, human arts, which make a man more learned and equip him for this life, and also benefit those who love God, as do all disciplines. But I have often expressed the wish that only pious men may be learned, for knowledge does not benefit evil men; it merely hurts them. Certain slanderers, who are inclined to twist everything to give it a sinister meaning, have interpreted this to mean that I teach that all studies are inane and frivolous.[94]

His misgivings and qualified endorsement of learning, Castellio said, were closely related to his belief that pride in knowledge and pretensions to knowledge would lead to authoritarianism. In his treatise *De calumnia* he takes aim at the modern Pharisees, the "rabbis who claim for themselves the authority to teach. What kind of men are they? Such, that if Christ himself came, they would never permit him to mount the lectern unless he was called by their own order and unless he knew the three languages that crucified Christ, that is, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. . . . They think so highly of Latin that they permit no one to teach the people unless he is an experienced Latinist."[95] It is obvious that skepticism led Castellio in more than one direction of thought. It prompted him to look for consensus as a criterion of truth, it motivated him to plead for tolerance, and it led him to hope for mystic enlightenment.

Beza's reply to Castellio, *De haereticis a civili magistratu puniendis* (1554), shows why skepticism was unacceptable to theologians on both sides of the Reformation debate. It endangered order and destroyed discipline. Moral and doctrinal certainty, by contrast, was the guarantor of social order. Beza called Castellio an "Academic," that is, a Skeptic in the Ciceronian tradition. "What is left," he asked, "but to revive Academic *akatalepsian* [inability to perceive/understand] and despair of certain knowledge, so that each person follows what seems to him to resemble the truth?" In this fashion monstrous doctrines could be introduced, "opinion instead of faith, a semblance of truth instead of truth, and Academic probability for cogent reason." Skepticism was anathema to Christians: "It is diametrically opposed to the Christian faith, no less than the truth is opposed to a lie; indeed, if we believed you, the Christian religion would necessarily perish root and stem." Since the Christian religion rested on the word of God, anyone who declared that the Bible was obscure destroyed the foundation of religion. Skeptic doubters like Castellio, who clamored

for tolerance and freedom of conscience, were plunging society into chaos. They were advocating not "freedom but licence."[96] Adam, the son of the reformer Andreas Karlstadt, renewed the attack on Castellio in 1563, bringing an odd assortment of charges against him. According to the complaint he lodged with the city council of Basel, Castellio was a "Papist" and an "Academic," who manifested the "Anabaptist spirit."[97] In his reply Castellio protested against this nonsensical combination of labels. He denied that he was a papist and vowed that he would never return to Catholicism. He had been approached "by great men more than once with the promise of reward," but he firmly believed in justification by faith and divine grace. He did not directly answer the charge of being an Academic, but commented ironically: "The Academicians were philosophers who said that nothing could be known and therefore they did not affirm anything. Beza himself frees me from this charge . . . chastising me for affirming a great deal." The charge that he was an Anabaptist sympathizer was too ludicrous to deserve an answer.[98]

Castellio's strategy of defense resembles in some respects that of his fellow skeptics, Erasmus and Agrippa. Like them, he emphasizes that he is putting forward opinions, not dictating laws: "I do not dictate my views to anyone, as if they were sacrosanct," he says in his *Defense of His Translations*. Indeed, respect for and tolerance of a dissenting opinion was the corollary of skepticism. Justifying his biblical translation against Calvin's criticism, for example, Castellio asserts that he "did not wish to pursue every point in which [Calvin] disagrees with me, for he, no less than I myself, must be at liberty to give an interpretation, each according to his own understanding and opinion." His tolerance of diverging interpretations and his willingness to be corrected were not signs of a lack of a commitment but attested to his integrity: *Tanti est apud me veritas*, "such is the value I place on truth."[99]

Unlike other features of humanism that were put to use in the Reformation debate, skepticism was rejected by apologists on both sides. We have seen that the participants in the debate capitalized on the reputation of humanists for propaganda purposes and availed themselves of aspects of the humanistic curriculum that served their own purposes. The humanist epistemology, however, could not be transformed into a useful tool. Skepticism and its corollaries, reliance on consensus, latitudinarianism, and mystical fideism, were rejected by leading theologians on both sides of the confessional debate. The rhetoric of doubt, the essential vehicle of skeptical thought, ran counter to the prevailing trend of corroborating doctrinal positions and tightening the bolts of institutional structures. Even in its qualified and Christianized form, the skepticism of humanists like Erasmus, Agrippa, and Castellio was seen by theologians as little more than a smokescreen for "atheism." Pleading for tolerance and denouncing doctrinaire attitudes, skeptics asked to be allowed to obey their own conscience; they asked for personal space in a world dominated by institutions. Steven Ozment called mysticism "dissent ideology." It is a label that also fits humanistic skepticism, insofar as it terminated in mysticism and questioned the limits of human knowledge. Like mysticism, skepticism explores the "latent revolutionary possibilities of the Christian religion" by challenging the regular, institutionalized path to salvation.[100] Whether philosophical doubt terminated in appeals to faith, tradition, or consensus, that is, whether it re-

lied on individual or collective experience, it presented a challenge to those privileged by the hierarchy of an institution. This was the common element that made all forms of skepticism suspect in the eyes of those who wished to maintain a degree of exclusion—a principal feature of confessionalism. Conversely, it was an epistemology that accorded well with the humanists' encyclopedic approach to life and learning and their advocacy of academic freedom; with their concept of history as open to progress and revision; and with their rhetorical method of arguing on both sides of a question.

In spite of the challenge skepticism presented to the institutional church, its rejection by Catholic theologians was temporary. After all, mysticism and fideism had a long tradition in Catholic literature. Positions similar to those taken by sixteenth-century Christian Skeptics—distrust in human knowledge and reliance on faith—had not been regarded out of order a century earlier. In his *Examen vanitatis gentium* (An Examination of the Vanity of the Nations, 1510), Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola explicitly commented on the relationship between skepticism and Catholicism. The difference between classical skeptics and Christian writers expressing doubt emerged at the decision-making stage, he said. The former were obliged to suspend judgment, while the latter took refuge in faith. "For the principles of our faith are not derived from a human being but from God himself; they do not rest on sense perception or imagination, they are not a human invention, but divine revelation; they are corroborated, not by experience gained from the study of the arts but by the light of faith." Thus fideists and skeptics both denied knowledge, but "from different causes and therefore producing different results."[101] In the context of the Reformation crisis, however, when the need for order overwhelmed the desire to explore the truth, mystical fideism was attacked for its inherent antiestablishment thrust. At the same time, voicing doubt became "heretical" in the original sense of the word, that is, divisive. Confessionalization, which promised order through uniformity, through precise doctrinal definitions and through clearly circumscribed religious practices, answered the needs of a generation plagued by factions. Once a religious settlement had been achieved, however, mysticism and fideism made a comeback within Catholicism. Traditionally historians have regarded this development as a mark of the "Counter-Reformation" but more recent studies have recognized it as a return to the groundswell of spirituality that had never ceased to flow.[102] One might add that fideism also continued to serve as a niche (not to say, a hideout) for skeptics. The climate of acceptance for Christian skeptics changed in the seventeenth century. It is significant that Martin Schoock defended Agrippa, noting that he attacked human knowledge only for the sake of arguing "that there was nothing certain or lasting anywhere except for the utterances of God which were solid and for the eminence of the divine word." Similarly, he exonerated Erasmus from the charge of skepticism since he did not deny the existence of truth but merely pointed out the difficulty of discerning it in view of the feebleness of the human mind.[103] Christianized versions of skepticism became acceptable. Indeed, Protestant apologists in the seventeenth century accused Catholics as a group of "incurable skepticism" because they insisted that Scripture was obscure and its interpretation rested on

the teaching authority of the church.[104] No doubt Catholics were more amenable to the kind of skeptical argument that terminated in fideism or reliance on consensus than the reformers, whose concept of scriptural clarity and divine inspiration of the elect allowed no room for uncertainty. To the elect, who were granted enlightenment, Scripture was never obscure.

Humanists and Confessionalization

Fear, Equivocation, and Withdrawal

The confessionalization of humanism was not an abstract process. It involved the indoctrination of individuals and their compliance with the new norms. Once the reformers had established their doctrinal positions, they urged followers to make a clear commitment and break with the practices of the established church. Catholic authorities in turn demanded clear proof of loyalty from those who lived in their jurisdiction. Many, however, were unable to make such a commitment. Peer pressure and threats by the authorities prevented some people from exercising a choice that went against the prevailing orthodoxy; an inability to decide on the merits of the religious parties vying for their loyalty kept others at the crossroads. Georg Witzel, who changed religious affiliations twice, commented on the general mood of uncertainty. People were "consumed by nagging doubts," he wrote. "They do not know whom to obey, whom to believe, whom to follow. I pity such men, I cannot blame them."[1] Confessed Lutherans listened with approval to Catholic preachers, "but were afraid to praise them openly out of fear of their neighbours"; conversely, there were Catholics "so timid that they are ashamed to profess their faith in public." Like the biblical Nicodemus, Witzel said, "they attend church at night, they sing at night, they come into their own at night; in the light of day they hide, speak under their breath, and dissimulate." Many monks and priests belonged to this class, he said. "They favor the Lutherans over the papists. In their outer garb they are papists, but in their hearts they carry Luther and always will." There were, moreover, many who chose to remain neutral or were eclectic in their beliefs. Some who attended Lutheran services declared nevertheless that they

> followed neither Luther nor Melanchthon nor any other sectarian leader, but were followers of the gospel. They would not reject any good counsel offered, but it was clear that the recent leaders of the evangelical party could err just as much as the pope and the cardinals. They admitted openly that they did not approve of everything in the sectarian party, nor on the other hand were they displeased with everything in the Catholic party. For there was much on both sides that might be adopted or rejected.

Similarly, there were people on the Catholic side who did not observe rites superstitiously and who were prepared to abandon customs that had no precedent in the

early church or went against the precepts of the gospel. They respected the central place of the gospel in church doctrine, deplored the lack of learning in Catholic priests, and were saddened by religious strife. They kept their distance from the debate, practiced personal piety, and "awaited the reformation of the church." Witzel distinguished, however, between uncommitted and unprincipled people, who adapted their behavior to the company present:

> Whenever they talk to sectarians, they talk like sectarians . . . but when they are among Catholics, they observe Catholic rites. They praise the church and vituperate sectarianism. They kowtow to tonsured priests, admire church ornaments, revere altars, venerate painted images, express respect for sermons, fall on their knees before the elevated host, beat their breasts, move their lips, genuflect before wooden images. If you ask them what they believe and which party they prefer, they say they don't know. If you press them, they say that must believe what those believe with whom they converse and whom they serve. What should I call such men . . . if not pagan atheists?[2]

Witzel describes a range of reactions to the pressure applied by the confessional parties in order to obtain a firm commitment from the laity. His comments reveal the difficulties experienced by individuals in assessing the merits of conflicting claims, weighing them against social and political factors, and balancing the external and internal forces shaping their lives. The resulting conflicts are amply documented in the letters of humanists. Many of them would have liked to stay on the sidelines of the religious debate, an attitude that accorded with their habits of mind and the rhetoric of doubt, but the intimidation practiced by both Catholics and reformers made it difficult to maintain neutrality.

Fear and Intimidation

The Catholic apologist Johann Cochlaeus commented on the physical dangers threatening those who resisted the reformers in cities dominated by them. At first the threats did not discourage him and a fellow deacon, Friederich Martoff, from opposing the Lutherans in Frankfurt. Pressure was mounting, however, against the two Catholic stalwarts "because one had written against Luther, the other had prohibited the introduction in his parish church of the new Lutheran rites." In 1525 matters came to a head. Civil unrest was spreading and violence broke out, forcing them to flee the city. "The city fathers were as afraid as the clergy of rioting and destruction of property. The two deacons would have been in the greatest danger, had they stayed. Their houses were stormed, and when the rebels did not find them, they vented their wrath on the wine barrels." Cochlaeus' house suffered less damage because his mother and a niece were the only inhabitants left, "and they took pity on the crying old woman."[3] Eobanus Hessus describes similar events in Erfurt: "All the houses belonging to canons have been stormed. More than fifty were stormed in one night. Tonight, as I am writing this, seven houses belonging to priests have been burned down to the ground."[4] In such circumstances pleading

neutrality was not an option. Dissenting humanists often chose to remain silent or employed discreet language.

Boniface Amerbach reported on the hostile climate faced by Catholics after Basel officially embraced the Reformation in 1529: "It is uncertain what punishment those face who remain loyal to the old faith, that is, who respect the teaching of the church. Some are afraid of exile, others of excommunication, and there are other dangers as well."[5] In the following years he walked a fine line between preserving his beliefs and accommodating the reformers. Other Catholics opted for exile, but Amerbach felt for his native city the proverbial attachment that made "the smoke at home brighter than the fire in a strange hearth." He was resigned to paying fines for noncompliance but not prepared to go against his conscience. He struggled in particular with the question of the Real Presence in the Eucharist: "I am not yet able to understand what our preachers profess, but I constantly pray to Jesus that I may remain firm in my belief, if it is correct, and if it is not, that he may inspire in me an understanding of the truth of the opposite view."[6] Professors at the University of Basel, as elsewhere, were required to swear an oath of allegiance and sign a *confessio* that ensured that their beliefs conformed with the city's creed. Amerbach, whose integrity matched his diplomatic skill, managed to negotiate a formula that satisfied both his conscience and the requirements of the reformed council.[7] Crotus Rubeanus was not as successful. He had been an enthusiastic Lutheran in the early twenties, but felt uncomfortable with the doctrinaire attitude he encountered in reformed Magdeburg and returned to the Catholic fold. In an apologia he criticized the reformers for using intimidation: "In many places, where the anti-papists hold sway, stern laws have been passed against those who profess the old religion. They want anyone who does not avoid the company of papists to pay a heavy fine to keep out of prison. . . . They have their own spies who denounce transgressors before the judges." Citizens were closely watched, even if they were abroad on business. "What someone has done in Naples contrary to such good laws is punished as soon as he returns to Magdeburg. O fair laws, so fine of hearing when dealing with ecclesiastical observances, and so blind and deeply asleep when dealing with adultery and insulting behaviour."[8]

Georg Witzel, who decided to brave it out in Lutheran Niemegk even after deciding that he was not going to toe the official line, was thrown into the dungeon. He thought "every day was his last, indeed nights were passed in the same terror, for we could not tell day and night apart." At last, he and a fellow prisoner were taken to the courtroom "out of this cave, tarred and feathered, and asked whether we believed what we had taught publicly for eight years with the greatest diligence and corresponding faith. We were asked things, that is, which no child could fail to know and no one would deny. Oh, what a humiliating and undignified interrogation we suffered! It was more difficult to bear, if I may say so, than the incarceration itself." He described the dangers awaiting anyone who challenged the prevailing orthodoxy: "If anyone desires to earn immortality by dying a martyr's death, he has that opportunity now. . . . Judgment is passed before the matter is argued in court. The stakes are prepared, the sword is sharpened, the rope selected."[9] In the end Witzel, like Crotus, returned to the Catholic faith. Both men immediately became the butt of Protestant satire. Crotus was portrayed

as humanist skeptic, lacking commitment; Witzel, as a would-be successor to Erasmus and, like him, a hypocrite skilled in rhetorical tricks. *A Play about Georg Witzel's Desertion to the Papists* contains a conversation between the two men. "As far as I am concerned," Crotus declares, "everyone is free and will always be free to adopt any doctrine he pleases. It is not my task . . . to render a verdict in religious controversies." He warns Witzel, however, that turncoats are unpopular. Witzel assures him that he is well prepared. "The orators explain how we can cleverly disguise whatever goes against us in a case that is not very good." He hopes to step into Erasmus' shoes: "It's not that he lacks erudition, but his strength is deserting him, and he deserves to be put out to pasture."[10]

Catholic authorities treated dissenters with similar intolerance. The long arm of the Inquisition is legendary and needs no example. Faced with the prospect of being tried for heresy, many who sympathized with the reformers chose to remain silent. In Zurich Johannes Zimmermann (Xylotectus) reported on the measures taken against those siding with the reformers prior to the victory of Zwinglianism: "We must keep silent or suffer. The parish priest incites the whole congregation against us. You will perhaps say that all adversity must be borne for Christ's sake. I know that, but the authority of one *plebanus* (people's priest) is more powerful than that of six hundred other learned men." Peter Frauenberger in Einsiedeln was likewise frightened into silence. He reported in 1520 that he had a visit from the Freiburg professor Hieronymus Baldung. Baldung was a staunch Catholic and rejected Luther's teaching as well as Erasmus' more moderate criticism of the Church. "So it was not safe for me, a lover of peace and concord, to say anything," Frauenberger reported.[11]

Jacob Cortebach, a correspondent of the Augustinian Maarten Lips, was so fearful of arousing suspicion that he was reluctant even to touch on the subject of Luther.[12] Lips discovered the wisdom of Cortebach's reticence, when one of his letters to the Louvain professor Sebastian Nautzenus was intercepted by his superiors. Ironically Lips had advised Nautzenus, a Lutheran sympathizer, to conceal his opinion since he did not wish to change it. "There are people with whom you may discuss your business without giving offense and perhaps even to your advantage." When Lips was asked by his superior to justify these remarks, he gave a casuistic response. He had written a "cautionary letter to a casual acquaintance." It was a genre that called for courtesy and persuasive arguments rather than stern rebukes:

> Words not only lose their effectiveness but even give grave offense, unless we tackle the subject with some psychological skill and words that are suited to the person's sensibilities. They should stop slandering me because I wrote in a polite, friendly, and intimate tone. . . . I feared that the man would be alienated right away if I used bitter and pungent medicine and that all my efforts would be lost. Thus it was not inappropriate that I should turn to a gentler remedy. . . . Because of the aggressiveness of [my accusers]—an aggressiveness from which I wish to abstain—I have come to be suspected of being in agreement with him, whereas I wanted to improve him, motivated by the charity I owe to my neighbour.

Lips proceeded to defend individual phrases in his letter with specious arguments. He had called Nautzenus' concealment of Lutheran books "prudent" because pub-

lic scandal must be avoided. "And is it not correct to call wisely and well done what is to the advantage of the public?" He had written that Luther was moved "by the spirit of Christ." This did not mean that he endorsed Luther's teaching. Did not everything in nature manifest God's spirit? And if every intelligence was guided by God, "what keeps us from saying in some sense correctly that Luther was sent by the spirit of Christ? This does not prevent him from deceiving or lying or blinding our eyes and minds with the devil's teachings. Do we not read in Kings that a lying spirit was sent by God . . . so why would they want to blame me for saying that Luther was sent by the spirit of Christ? . . . Sometimes affliction and calamity is sent by God to test the patience of the faithful and allow them to give proof of their righteousness and integrity." The experience taught Lips a lesson. He exercised caution, and in a letter to Melchior Viandalus breaks off potentially embarrassing remarks with the words: "I would write more, but I am held back by fear." He asks his correspondent to direct letters to mutual friends rather than to him at the monastery.[13]

Mutianus Rufus in Gotha felt equally beleaguered. His clerical status imposed greater restraints on him than on laymen, he said:

> We don't have the freedom of discussing matters, as do the philosophers. We must speak by the rules. We are called enemies of the cross (as Pope Leo says) not only for our deeds but also for our words. Moreover, there are in the Catholic party, many or rather the greater part, who are timid and weak, and must be nourished with milk rather than solid food. The head of that orthodox sect, [Christ], addresses them, privileged by his special love: "Let the little ones come to me . . . " We must therefore act with more moderation and spare the ears of the monastics and avoid offending the pious ears of simple people. We must respect the views of the people. To reject the authority of the church, when you are a member of its body, is contemptuous and full of impiety, even if you have discovered errors.

Although Mutianus was clearly in agreement with the reformers on many issues, he kept silent on his sympathies. When Lutheran friends criticized his behavior, he defended himself in a letter to Johann Lang: "I have firmly resolved to keep quiet and far away from all contention, far away, as you know, from abuse and bitter words, and yet there are certain turgid minds who treat me unfairly and are hard on me because I keep quiet." When civil unrest broke out, Mutianus kept a low profile. He was entirely candid about his motives in letters to friends. He supported the teaching of the Lutherans but was disturbed by their methods: "Doors are pounded with rocks, windows rattled. This is a barbaric way to act. I would be foolish to admit openly that I am on the side of the wild Lutherans. They would inflict harm on the holy fathers at night and kill them. So, dear Lutherans, you must pardon me. I appeal to your goodness and prudence. If you were in my place, good men, would you act differently?"[14]

Silence or outward conformity promised safety, although Erasmus contended that "even recantation did not impress anyone very much." For who did not construe this to mean "he prefers embarrassment to burning at the stake"?[15] While intimidation and legal threats were the chief factors preventing free confessional choice, psychological pressure from friends added to the discomfort of those who supported an opinion contrary to that popular in their own circles.

Peer Pressure and the Bonds of Friendship

The mixture of religious and social motives governing an individual's decision is evident, for example, from the letters of Pierre Toussain, Oecolampadius' housemate in Basel. Toussain was willing to face the hostility of his fellow canons at Metz but not the tears of his widowed mother, who was distressed over reports that he was sympathizing with the Reformation. On the advice of Oecolampadius, he left Basel and returned to France. "You know what women are like," he wrote apologetically, when explaining his decision to Guillaume Farel. His mother had pleaded with him "by the breasts that gave me suck, and the knees on which I was dandled." He left, he said, "partly for the sake of studying in peace, partly so as not to alienate those who, as you know, have some claim on me, but only in matters not essential to the Christian religion. And I hope I can some day lead them to Christ, with the Lord's help. And so I have accepted the advice of my teacher, though reluctantly."[16] For some people, the personal element was in fact the decisive one, as evidenced by an exchange of letters between Maarten Lips and Nicolaus Buscoducensis, a teacher at Antwerp. Buscoducensis was taking Luther's side in the controversy over free will, but for Lips personal loyalty to Erasmus rather than the doctrinal issue of free will (which he called "a small matter"!) was the overriding issue. He admonished Buscoducensis "not to abandon Erasmus, with whom you were so closely linked in friendship, because of such a small matter. I am writing this, not because I think you need my counsel, but because I want you to know how longingly and how fervently I wish to preserve our mutual affection."[17]

The same mixture of motives appears in Hutten's writings. Although he tries to depict his own confessional choice as a decision based on principles, he applies social pressure to others. He professed to be a supporter of the Lutheran cause rather than of Luther himself. Indeed, he emphasized that he was not personally attached to the reformer and pointedly denied that Luther was his teacher or associate. Rather, "those who oppose the tyranny of the Roman Pontiff and dare to protect the truth and turn from the decrees of men to the doctrine of the Gospel have now come to be commonly referred to as Lutherans. I will therefore gladly bear the disgrace of being called a Lutheran, lest I seem to deny my support to this *cause*." In this point, however, he was not entirely consistent. Applying a different yardstick to Erasmus, he asked him to take into consideration personal loyalties. He chastised Erasmus for abandoning the reformers and failing "to show regard for your many friends who for the most part have deserved better treatment at your hands, friends who are hardly less willing to be separated from Luther than they are to be torn from the truth itself or led into ways contrary to the Gospel."[18] Erasmus, in turn, insisted that personal loyalties must be disregarded: "It does not matter whether Erasmus is in agreement with Luther, but whether the Christian commonwealth is in agreement with gospel teaching. . . . if there is any human element, it must be discounted when we deal with the glory of Christ and the sincerity of the Catholic faith."[19]

These were brave words. In practice, personal relations did affect confessional decisions. Erasmus insisted that "he had never renounced [his] friendship because someone was rather inclined toward Luther or because he kept his distance from

Luther, as long as he proved a faithful and amiable friend."[20] His claim seems to be borne out by his overall success in maintaining contacts with men on both sides of the confessional debate, but he was the exception rather than the rule. His singular contribution to learning entitled him to special considerations and a measure of indulgence in the eyes of humanists on both sides of the debate. Georg Witzel's experience was the more common one. When the Lutheran pastor returned to the Catholic faith in 1531, he found himself ostracized. Former friends avoided him as if he were "a basilisk or a crocodile or a hyena, or as if my aspect could turn them to stone, or as if I were a cannibal who would devour them." He was unable to engage his former friends in discussion. "They covered up everything with tricks and hypocrisy . . . and answered me blandly," refusing to discuss the subject.[21]

The correspondence of humanists is full of tales of friendships strained or broken over confessional matters. Melanchthon's experience is a case in point.[22] His adherence to Luther led to a four-year hiatus in his correspondence with Erasmus, but the diplomacy that marked the character of both men allowed them to resume relations eventually. They agreed to disagree. Diplomacy was of no avail, however, where a corresponding receptiveness was lacking. It is well known that Melanchthon's support for Luther led to an estrangement with his great-uncle Johann Reuchlin, who asked him in 1521 to refrain from writing to him in future. He had promised to leave Melanchthon his valuable library but changed his mind because of the young man's association with Luther.[23] The Nürnberg humanist Willibald Pirckheimer also reported having lost many friends over the confessional question: "They have been counselled to abstain from contact with me because I do not adhere to the genuine religion"—that is, the Protestant creed embraced by the city council. At the same time the Prior Kilian Leib of Rebdorf, who had been a frequent correspondent of Pirckheimer, broke off all contact with him in 1523 *because* he regarded him as a Lutheran. The two men resumed their correspondence five years later after Leib was satisfied that Pirckheimer had turned his back on the reformers for good.[24] Pirckheimer's compatriot, Christoph Scheurl, was another Nürnberger whose associations were jolted by the confessional debate. He, too, was caught between the fronts when he tried to retain both Luther's and Eck's friendship. He had made Johann Eck's acquaintance in 1515 in Ingolstadt and greatly enjoyed his hospitality, intelligence, wit, and erudition, as he said. Subsequently he introduced Eck to his own network of humanistic friends and claimed to have "promoted a friendship" between him and the reformers Luther and Karlstadt. After it became clear that Eck and Luther were on opposite sides of the doctrinal struggle, Scheurl tried for a while to act as a mediator between them. Soon, however, he was obliged to concede that confessional differences had driven a deep wedge into their relationship. "I am labouring in vain," he wrote to Eck, "when I seek to reconcile you and to retain the good will of both of you."[25] In April 1519 he reiterated these sentiments: "I have long decided to pursue a friendship with both of you and, not content with retaining it, increasing it as well; and not to exalt one to the detriment of the other; I have wished you both well. . . . your quarrels, controversies and dissensions are no concern of mine." The following year he expressed frustration over his inability to maintain good relations with both men: "Alas, dear God, it was an unlucky sign under which I tried to make you friends; what came to pass was very different from

what I expected." There was much pettiness. Supporters of Luther held it against him that he had joined Eck for a drink during a chance meeting at an inn in Ingolstadt. Scheurl resented the fact that the confessional debate should disrupt long-standing social bonds.[26] In the end, however, he had to make a choice. "I have always loved Doctor Martin with all my heart, but under no circumstances shall I turn away from Eck, an old and well-deserving friend," he wrote to Melanchthon. He remained Catholic and accepted the social consequences: "I shall be indifferent to all Lutherans, whether they hate or favour me."[27]

It is interesting to note how many humanists depicted the difficulty of making a commitment to one religious party as the difficulty of choosing between Erasmus and Luther. Ulrich Zasius, for example, shilly-shallied in 1521: "I won't desert the most learned man in the whole world [Erasmus]; that is, I won't desert him but I wish no evil to Luther, a man of singular learning and of more than exemplary consistency." Boniface Amerbach clung to the idea that a compromise was possible. In 1524 he wrote to his friend Montaigne that he would like to embrace *media via inter utrumque*, a path halfway between Erasmus and Luther. After this path had been cut off by their bitter controversy over free will, Amerbach confessed his helplessness, quoting Cicero: "I know whom to avoid, but it's not quite clear to me whom to follow."[28] Zwingli wrote to Beatus Rhenanus in 1522, discussing the "duel" that was shaping up between Erasmus and Luther. Each man had a valuable contribution to make to the Christian cause, he said: "In each there is something that can be most helpful to us and in no way harmful. Each of them is authoritative in his judgment. Yet each man has his peculiar qualities (no offense meant). If one of them combined both qualities, he would be imcomparably superior to the other. Why, then, do not both serve us, each in his capacity?"[29] Sylvius Egranus was another one who expressed his choice as one between Erasmus and Luther, or rather, between their approaches: "I grant Luther a good mind and acumen, but judgment, erudition, and prudence I find completely lacking in him, while I see these qualities abundantly present in Erasmus. I therefore like Erasmus' meek spirit, or as they call it, 'fear' better than Luther's boldness, his insulting and aggressive manner, his ardour and vehemence, which has had no other effect so far than to mingle heaven and earth and turn everything upside down."[30]

The trepidation manifested by these men does not admit of a single interpretation. It cannot be seen merely as anxiety over confessional choices, although this was no doubt the principal point. They also had to make a choice between professional interests and confessional loyalties, between humanism and the Reformation.[31] In other words, they had to set priorities, since in many cases the confessional choice impacted on career opportunities and research conditions. Career ambitions, however, were considered a sordid motive. No doubt, they did affect decisions, but most people were embarrassed to acknowledge them, and the names of Erasmus and Luther may have served as codes for professional and confessional attachments, respectively. The fact that the choice was put in these terms reminds us, moreover, that it was not made in a social vacuum. Personal feelings and the feelings of friends and mentors played a role. Not surprisingly, many humanists were stalling and trying to remain on the sidelines of the debate as long as possible.

The Desire to Remain on the Sidelines

The characteristic facility to argue on both sides of a question, a habit of thought acquired by humanists through their training in classical rhetoric, favored detachment. Erasmus is the most prominent example of the tendency to "be a spectator rather than an actor"[32] As a man of standing in the intellectual community, he supplied a model for other humanists. They could pattern themselves after him without loss of face. He lent a certain respectability to a position that otherwise smacked of opportunism. Christoph Scheurl was one of those who cited Erasmus as his guide. "Erasmus is keeping to himself, he hates those party labels, and they are hateful indeed, because we are all Christians, " he pointed out to Melanchthon. He carefully avoided committing himself. When Luther's *Theses* appeared in print, he tried to gauge public opinion at first. Letters from this period amount to a poll taking. A message to Kilian Preis, accompanying a copy of the *Theses*, is couched in carefully nuanced language. He was confident, he said, that Preis "would not find the propositions entirely absurd." In a letter to Eck he withheld his own opinion entirely, asking for Eck's verdict instead. Writing to Caspar Güttel, who sympathized with the reformers, he reported that the *Theses* were well received, but attributed the positive judgment to others. Pirckheimer, he said, "admired and cherished the conclusions." Similarly, he told Eck in a follow-up letter that in Wittenberg "the duke and the academics all agree with Luther." To Spalatin he wrote in approving terms: "As long as Martin is successful, our university is bound to be more successful than others in Germany and Italy. . . . He is the one who is on everyone's lips and brings more popularity to the university and the duke than anyone else."[33] It is significant, however, that Scheurl congratulated Luther on his public relations victory rather than on his ideas and their reception. In this manner he avoided taking sides in the religious debate. Over the next two years, he continued to prevaricate. In a letter of 1519 to Eck he danced around the question of his support for Luther: "You believe I am inclined toward Luther's party? If I were, I would be in good company. . . . Martin himself has never scorned my friendship, and he is very popular both at the Saxon court and at the university." A statement in a contemporary letter to Otto Beckmann manifests the same ambivalence: "What do you want me to do, dearest Otto? Should I suffer the accusation of being a deserter or should I think 'whatever quarrel one is involved in, one must duly serve one's lord?'" A letter to Luther in August of 1519 betrays none of these doubts, but another, written to Oecolampadius, fishes for information: "I don't know what they think about Luther in your place . . . Christian thoughts, I hope."[34] The following year Scheurl declared his neutrality in the letter to Melanchthon that has already been cited. Shortly afterward he repeated this sentiment to Otto Beckmann: "I see that it has come to armed combat. I remain a spectator of these matters."[35] Scheurl eventually opted for the Catholic church. The letters from the crucial years prior to the Diet of Worms reveal him as a man more worried about political correctness and about projecting the right image than given to soul searching. Lutherans saw Scheurl as a hypocrite. To his annoyance he joined the cast of the satire *Eck Planed Down*, appearing as a "spy employed for reconnoitering the Lutheran business, who pretended to be on friendly terms with

Luther." Reacting to his portrayal as an agent of the papists, Scheurl again stressed his neutrality. He had never been a partisan, he said. He had "given no counsels except those conducive to maintaining good relations."[36]

Other men in the Erasmian circle followed his advice and adopted a neutral stand. Hartmann of Hallwyl commented on Luther in a letter to Wolfgang Capito: "If the Lutheran affair causes upheaval, what good and truly Christian man could support him, when Christ himself teaches his people nothing more earnestly than peace and charity toward our neighbour? . . . You advise me rightly and truly to put aside the names of the papist and Lutheran factions. I shall take good care to do so. I prefer being a spectator to being an actor in this comedy, or rather, tragedy."[37] Capito in turn noted that it was becoming increasingly difficult to remain a spectator of the debate. He "longed for the old safety," he wrote. But as councillor to the Archbishop of Mainz, he was "no longer outside the reach of battle."[38] Other Erasmians reflected the same reluctance to engage in the debate. Michael Hummelberger, for example, insisted that he "supported no one's party, neither the people who favour the gospel, nor those who appear to oppose them." In the case of Paul Volz, neutrality took the form of eclecticism. He asserted: "I read everyone's books. I disdain no one. I do not swear allegiance to the words of one master. I probe everything and retain what is good."[39]

Erasmus himself explained his motives for wishing to remain aloof from the debate as a mixture of ideological and practical considerations. The Lutherans, he said, "accuse me of being lukewarm, of using soft words before princes, of being too fond of peace. But, to speak frankly, I would rather err on that side, not so much because it is safer, but also because it is more pious." He considered love of peace a Christian virtue, but he also lacked a heroic disposition and had no taste for martyrdom. Or, as he put it, he was willing "to be a martyr for Christ, if he himself gives me the strength; but I do not wish to be a martyr for Luther."[40] Elsewhere he explained that he was obliged to be discreet because "age and health do not permit me to wander about or live in poverty nor to hide somewhere or flee from place to place. Therefore, if I have kept quiet, it was to avoid becoming enmeshed in this inextricable labyrinth and forsaking the cause of the Gospel."[41]

In writings that had a designated advertising function, such as his *Compendium vitae*, a brief autobiographical sketch meant for the use of future biographers, Erasmus manipulated the balance of his motives and presented himself primarily as a lover of peace and a respecter of consensus. He observed that until his fifties he had never been involved in controversy and emphasized that he was "always civil in his replies."[42] In the *Catalogue of Works*, first published in 1523 and repeatedly updated by the Froben Press, he discussed his polemical writings at length, but portrayed them as defensive. He insisted that they were aimed at putting an end to the controversy in question rather than challenging his opponent in turn. Had he manifested "a desire for revenge matching the desire of his adversaries to do harm, [he might] have then and still could now hurt their cause." The dispute with Luther, he said, was undertaken *discendi gratia*, as an intellectual exercise.[43] Such protestations were calculated to create (or preserve) the image of a man averse to polemics, a victim of personal attacks, and a lover of peace who "was maligned by both sides, because [he] exhorted both sides to adopt more peaceful plans."[44] The disclaimers masked

the fact that religious controversies dominated Erasmus' literary output in the last ten years of his life and were carried on by him with considerable venom. He abandoned neutrality after 1521, but the image of the impartial man survives in the persona he fashioned for himself in autobiographical writings.

Practical considerations apart, Erasmus' original position of neutrality was predicated on his definition of "truth," which in turn was intimately connected with his epistemology. According to Erasmus, the absolute truth could not be discerned by human beings. In doctrinal matters, decisions therefore rested with the church as an institutional body and a historical community, whose teachings were guided by divine wisdom. It followed that doctrinal statements by unauthorized individuals needed to be phrased in a nonassertive manner. "It is not enough to speak the truth, unless we use circumspection and chaste language," he told Luther. "But you call me an 'Epicurus' for saying so." The relativism inherent in Erasmus' concept of the truth emerges from his explanation of the meaning of "circumspection." The circumspect man, Erasmus said, dispenses the truth as a physician dispenses medication or adjusts a diet to the patient's condition. Luther, by contrast, wanted to "feed" theological matter to the people "at any time . . . and whatever the question, and before whomsoever." Considerations of time, subject, and audience were of the essence, however:

> First of all, it is not pious to debate about matters of which God has wanted us to be ignorant, such as the day of the last judgment. Secondly, there are matters which He wants us to know well, and these, I say expressly, should be learned well. Then there are matters that can rightly be investigated, but up to a point. Enough is enough, however. . . . In that category I place questions about freedom of the will, and those connected with them, the distinctions between the Persons [in the Trinity]; specifics about its origin and procession. Finally, I distinguish certain matters which, although they may be true, cannot be discussed before everyone without risk to piety and concord. These matters must be prudently husbanded. And among these I place many issues which you [Luther] now reveal to lay people in the German language, for example, concerning Evangelical liberty. Discussing them may be fruitful if it is done in its proper place and in a sober manner; what fruit your discussions will bear remains to be seen.[45]

Erasmus disapproved of Luther's candor as unnecessarily provocative. "The truth need not always be stated, and much depends on how it is stated," he wrote in 1520. He complemented his advice by stressing that "it can never be right to go against the truth, but to conceal it may occasionally be beneficial; and in every case it is important to bring it out at the most suitable time and in the most suitable fashion."[46] A similar statement of 1521 in a letter to Bishop Luigi Marliano uses terms familiar from classical rhetorical handbooks outlining the ideal of *aptum*: "not always, not everywhere, not before everyone." Jacob Spiegel, then at the court of Charles V, gave his uncle, Jacob Wimpfeling, the same advice. He counseled him to watch his words and observe the principle "not everywhere, not before everyone, not everything," if he wanted to secure peace and tranquillity. It would be counterproductive, he told him, to "speak too freely or openly state the truth when it is untimely."[47] Maarten Lips likewise reminded his correspondent Nautzenus of the rule of *aptum*: "Do not speak your mind without regard for place, time, and company."[48]

The rules governing speech also governed Christian behavior, according to Erasmus. To corroborate the value of concealing the truth in certain circumstances, he cited the example of Christ and the apostles, as well as Plato's well-known recommendation that the ruler may conceal the truth to make good laws palatable to the common people.[49] The connection between good morals and good rhetoric, both of which require wisdom, is a theory based on the Socratic equation of wisdom and virtue. The idea was popularized in antiquity by the Greek orator Isocrates, whose works Erasmus published in a Latin translation. In Erasmus, however, we find the classical ideal in a Christian setting, with the rhetorical rules confirmed by biblical examples. According to Erasmus, Christ himself observed the rule of *aptum*. "In my opinion it is right to withhold the truth," Erasmus wrote, "when its utterance would do no good. It is for this reason that Christ kept silent before Pilate." In another letter critical of Luther's imprudent speech, he again referred to the "prudent steward of the truth" personified by Christ and the apostle Paul, who were not averse to using "holy cunning" (*sancta vafricies*). Elsewhere Erasmus argues: "If he who is the Truth commands that this truth be suppressed for a time—a truth we must know and confess in order to be saved—what is novel about my remark that the truth must be suppressed in some instances?"[50]

While neutrality remained a respectable option until 1521, when Luther was officially declared a heretic, it was branded as a mark of indecision, cowardice, or hypocrisy in later years. In 1520 Luther himself had suggested to Erasmus to keep silent about their relationship to avoid damaging the cause of the reformers, and Hutten had given similar advice to Reuchlin.[51] Soon, however, diplomatic silence and skillful equivocation created credibility problems for those who wished to remain bystanders in the religious debate. Erasmus' policy of "husbanding" the truth was met with sharp criticism from both Catholics and reformers. One of the most damning verdicts came from the Dominican Ambrosius Pelargus, who like Erasmus had left Basel and settled in Freiburg. The two expatriates differed over Erasmus' handling of the truth. After the humanist's death Pelargus published his views on his tactics, commenting specifically on Erasmus' defense against the censures of the Paris theologians.[52] He criticized Erasmus' tendency to equivocate, expressing doubt about his veracity. Readers, he said, regarded Erasmus' words as a "smoke screen" and "lacking in candor." He himself found them "ambiguous and open to diverse meanings."[53] Erasmus had admitted that he had not spoken *simpliciter*, in a straightforward manner. But this did not excuse him; "it merely proved [his] inconstancy."[54] Pelargus had no patience with Erasmus' equivocations and was unwilling to "tie [him]self in knots for an interpretation." "Who will believe you?" he exclaimed." [C]an you hope to blind everyone's eyes?" "When the theologians give you trouble, you twist the meaning of your words." He repeatedly accused Erasmus of "tergiversation," of "throwing up a smoke screen," of trying to "slip away through loopholes."[55] As a result, he said, some people counted Erasmus "among the most lightweight jokers and mimes."[56] Similarly, Alberto Pio, whose comments have already been quoted in another context, accused Erasmus of *amphisbetein*, "fence sitting." In reply Erasmus explained that his unwillingness to champion one religious party to the detriment of the unity of the church was not "fence sitting" but evinced a love of peace.[57] Pio's compatriot, the Dominican Ambrosius Catharinus, had similar reservations

about Erasmus' truthfulness. "It would be a lengthy affair," he said, "to pursue all [of Erasmus'] tergiversations . . . and hypocritical arguments." Elsewhere he called him a "liar and impostor" and accused him of "mixing everything up and speaking in a confused manner" to deceive the reader.[58] The Louvain theologian Jacques Masson likewise criticized Erasmus' policy of detachment. He disdained "people who want to be neutral spectators of the dispute and keep to themselves, of whom Erasmus is clearly one." Citing the biblical injunction "Any man who is not for me is against me," he concluded: "There is no place for neutrality in this matter therefore."[59]

It is interesting to note that Erasmus' first biographer, his lifelong friend and admirer Beatus Rhenanus, completely passed over Erasmus' neutral phase and failed to place any particular emphasis on the features that led him to adopt this attitude: his epistemology and his love of peace.[60] Beatus not only failed to acknowledge Erasmus' initial policy of neutrality, but also his later efforts to bring about a reconciliation of the churches through mutual concessions. His purpose may have been to depict Erasmus as a staunch Catholic rather than a man who wished to remain above the parties. He insisted that Erasmus was committed to the Catholic faith and "never switched his loyalty on any account whatsoever." He therefore explained at considerable length why Erasmus left Catholic Freiburg and returned to Protestant Basel at the end of his life: The journey to Basel was a stop on the way to the Netherlands, which illness turned into a prolonged sojourn ending in death. He also discredited the rumor that Erasmus' loyalty to the Catholic Church was bought with bribes, by relating that he had declined Pope Paul's offer of a cardinal's hat. The long list of Erasmus' friends and benefactors in Beatus' account is carefully whetted and contains only sterling Catholics.[61]

The verdict of the reformers on the subject of Erasmus' neutrality was similar to that of Catholic theologians. Luther's reference to Erasmus' being an "eel" is famous.[62] Hutten called him a chameleon as well as a "Proteus" or "Vertumnus," mythological figures proverbial for their ability to change into various shapes. In Luther's *Tabletalk* we find a reminiscence of a conversation between the Elector Frederick of Saxony and Duke George of Saxony. "What kind of a man is Erasmus?" Frederick asked. "One doesn't know where one stands with him." "May the plague take him," answered George. "One doesn't know what he is up to. I prefer the Wittenbergers. With them it's 'yes' or 'no.'"[63] Hutten's *Expostulatio* (1523), which received kudos in the Protestant camp, represents an important witness to the increasingly militant climate that made a neutral stand impossible. Even if we make allowance for Hutten's belligerent character, his invective is an indication of the disdain with which the idea of impartiality was met by committed Lutherans. Erasmus' critics accused him of betraying Luther's cause and ignored the rationale he offered for remaining neutral, suggesting that ignoble motives rather than epistemological considerations were determining his position. Hutten summed up Erasmus' motives as an ugly mixture of fear, ambition, and hope of financial gain: "First of all there is your insatiable thirst for recognition and your lust for fame which they say make you unable to bear any talent that threatens to rival yours; and then there is a certain weakness in your character which has always displeased me as something unworthy of your greatness, but which leads me to believe that sheer dread made you yield to their threats." Finally he surmised that Erasmus "had perhaps been bribed or might be anticipating

some sort of preferment."[64] He contrasted Erasmus' emphasis on prudence and husbanding the truth with his own reckless idealism which dictated that the truth be told regardless of the consequences: "Everything I have to say is true and clear and straightforward; . . . you will be forced to feign and invent, to concoct, counterfeit, and deceive." Hutten was disgusted with Erasmus' concept of husbanding the truth: "You assert that one does not always have to tell the truth and that the way one speaks matters more—this sacrilegious utterance of yours ought to be shoved down your throat again (indeed, the matter at hand compels me to express this with some animus) if those who now force heretics to recant or send them to the stake, properly did their job. For what can be more godless and contrary to the teaching of Christ than to assert that the truth does not always have to be told, for the sake of which he wanted us to die?"[65]

Hutten dismisses as hypocrisy and dissimulation Erasmus' advice to accommodate one's speech to the circumstances and the audience. He chooses to interpret Erasmus' aversion to controversy as "weakness of character, which did not allow [him] to remain firm in [his] convictions" rather than as a sign of a peaceable disposition or the necessary consequence of a skeptical epistemology. He does allude to Erasmus' reliance on consensus and authority in the decision-making process, but scoffs at it as a philosophy of convenience adopted by people lacking spirit. "Can you find no counsel within yourself? Do you not have an intellect to direct you or a desire to be guided in life less from without, to be less dependent on others?" he asks.[66] Such incomprehension or unwillingness to acknowledge the legitimacy of Erasmus' skepticism prompted the humanist to establish his criteria more clearly. In his reply to Hutten he affirmed that skepticism ipso facto made him "dependent on others." At the same time he defended the practical advantages of diplomacy and accommodation. He justified his policy of suppressing the truth when it seemed opportune to do so by citing the example of the Fathers, and indeed of Christ and the apostles, who had concealed the truth from those who lacked the maturity to comprehend it. In any case, constancy was a quality that did not consist "in always saying the same thing, but in always pursuing the same end." In response to Hutten's assertiveness reflecting a typically Lutheran reliance on personal enlightenment, Erasmus defended his own readiness to defer judgment to the church. He justified it, first on epistemological grounds, and second in practical terms. Since human beings were fallible, it was not safe to entrust oneself to "the authority of this person or that one." One must listen to the divine truth embodied in the long-standing traditions of the church and in Christ's human representative, the pope. Finally, he taunted his critic: "If Hutten is such a staunch supporter of the truth and ready to die for it, then why does he flee and hide? Let him go to Rome or the Netherlands—there he will obtain the longed-for martyr's crown."[67]

Hutten's arguments were taken up by Otto Brunfels, who touched on Erasmus' skeptical epistemology, contrasting it with Luther's assertiveness: "You may have doubts about [Luther's] spirit, since you have doubts even about Scripture. We, however, have no doubts but respect him as a prophet and apostle of Christ, not inflated with Erasmian rhetoric, not valued by kings and popes, but speaking through the Holy Spirit and announcing the greatness of God." He could not accept Erasmus' detachment and neutrality. Matters of faith "could not be discussed with arguments

on both sides. For Scripture, the divine foundation, is solid." Like Hutten, Brunfels alleged that ambition and monetary consideration were at the bottom of Erasmus' refusal to support Luther. He accused Erasmus of being "consumed by an insatiable thirst for fame" and asked sarcastically: "What reward have the papists offered you to speak against sound doctrine, contrary to your own conscience?" He did not consider Erasmus' earlier refusal to take sides a praiseworthy sign of an irenic mind, but interpreted it as cowardice and a reluctance to defend God's word: "You forever protest in your letters and books that you do not wish to be involved with either party. . . . go on and be fond of your independence; we, meanwhile, depend on the gospel and are Christ's partisans." Erasmus had spoken of the "advantage" of keeping the peace. It was indeed advantageous, Brunfels said sarcastically, "for it is not pleasant to suffer persecution for Christ's cross and gravely to imperil one's property, reputation, and life!"[68]

Erasmus Alber, then studying theology in Wittenberg, similarly rejected Erasmus' policy of remaining on the sidelines. "Let Erasmus sit quietly, if that is his fancy; let him abet the thieves." Luther, by contrast, would speak out and seek the martyr's crown. Like Brunfels, Alber denied that Erasmus' reluctance to engage in the debate stemmed from praiseworthy irenicism, attributing it to fear and hypocrisy instead. "Erasmus wants to offend no one and please everyone." "The Erasmian policy differs from the Lutheran in so far as . . . Erasmus teaches a kind of Phariseeism." He presents himself as a lover of peace, but this is merely a pretense. "He wants to give the appearance that he is not opposing [the Lutherans], but in the meantime he leaves nothing undone to oppose them." Alternatively, Alber attributed Erasmus' attitude to a lack of understanding. He failed to realize that the present circumstances called for radical preaching and that it was a vain attempt "to cure the world's malaise with a sweet and pleasant draught."[69]

Melanchthon provided an assessment of Erasmus' motives in the *Oration Concerning Erasmus*, delivered twenty years after the humanist's death.[70] Among his intellectual virtues, Melanchthon mentions a fertile mind, eloquence, and industry; among his moral virtues he includes prudence, caution, modesty, and generosity. Interestingly, however, he ignores Erasmus' efforts to stay above the parties. On the contrary, he discusses his polemics at length, crediting him with victory over his Catholic adversaries, but ascribing his success to eloquence rather than theological expertise: "God had armed Erasmus with a Gorgon head of his own, namely eloquence." Melanchthon mentions the generous offers Erasmus received from the papal court and hints that they were meant as bribes. He does not suggest, however, that Erasmus was swayed by such offers, as some of his contemporaries had alleged. On the contrary, he asserts that Erasmus "could have received great rewards from the popes for agreeing with them, if he had placed ambition above scholarship." In a significant deviation from Beatus' explanation and Erasmus' own statements, he declared that he returned to Protestant Basel at the end of his life because "he wanted to be a citizen of the Basel *church*." Melanchthon's statements on Erasmus' relationship with Luther are convoluted, to say the least: "Although there appears to have been a difference of opinion concerning certain controversial questions between Erasmus and Luther, there is no doubt that Erasmus was completely in agreement with him in the matter of church discipline and in criticizing errors in

the observance of ecclesiastical ceremonies instituted by men. For it is agreeed that he often said that Luther surpassed all ancient and recent exegetes in his interpretation of the Sacred Books . . . but that in his polemics he exaggerated things in a horrible manner, to avoid giving the impression that he was making concessions." He reinforces the impression that Erasmus and Luther were in general agreement by adding a summary of Erasmus' advice to Duke Frederick of Saxony: "Erasmus said that [Luther's] teaching was on the whole pious, but that he would like to see certain unnecessary and rather shocking questions passed over and the discussion carried on in a more peaceable manner." He concludes with another attempt to minimize the conflict between Erasmus and Luther: "It is not surprising if in such an ocean of controversies there happens to be a disagreement of opinions even between good men."

It is notable that neither Beatus Rhenanus, who was prepared to eulogize his friend and mentor, nor Melanchthon, whose praise was qualified by doctrinal differences, placed emphasis on Erasmus' love of peace or his efforts to remain above the party lines—the qualities he himself had placed in the foreground. Nor did the two biographers refer to the epistemological angle of Erasmus' dispute with Luther to explain his desire to keep aloof from the controversy, another point Erasmus himself stressed repeatedly. They shied away from references to Erasmus' policy of neutrality, evidently considering it an embarrassing aspect of his career that did not lend itself to a positive interpretation, either when speaking to a Catholic or a Protestant audience.

Withdrawal and Reorientation

While aloofness from the religious debate had been acceptable in the beginning and, as we have seen, counseled by the reformers themselves in certain circumstances, the events of 1521 forced people to make a decision. Some pondered the conflicting claims of the parties and felt they were forced to navigate a course between Scylla and Charybdis, as Witzel put it; others were carried away by excitement. Young people, in particular, flocked to Wittenberg and came under the spell of Luther and Melanchthon. Witzel tells us that he arrived as a curious onlooker, but before long had turned into an enthusiastic supporter of Luther: "I hurried there to be a spectator and a listener, and all of a sudden I was an actor in this amazing drama." He describes the general excitement, "the sweet sense of freedom . . . the applause of the world. Even a prudent and perspicacious sixty-year-old could have been hooked, not to speak of a twenty-year-old."[71]

We have noted that a number of humanists spoke of making a decision between Erasmus and Luther, meaning that professional concerns formed an undercurrent disturbing their confessional choice. The required decision led to a parting of "incidental" and professional humanists, that is, of writers who had benefited from a humanistic education and favored the New Learning but who had a professional interest in the religious question, and humanists proper, that is, teachers of language and literature, editors, translators, and antiquaries, whose first commitment was to research. For the former—often theologians or career politicians—taking a public

stand on the religious question was an inescapable duty and a professional obligation. For the latter, withdrawing from the debate remained an option, even after professing neutrality had become impossible.

Silence concerning doctrinal matters did not necessarily signal disapproval. It could indicate a preoccupation with other matters. Eobanus Hessus is a case in point. He was a Lutheran sympathizer, and lived and taught in communities that supported his own religious preference: in Nürnberg from 1526 to 1532; in Erfurt before 1526 and again from 1533 to 1537 when he was called to Marburg by Duke Philip of Hesse. Much of the information about his life comes from his published correspondence and from a biographical sketch by his friend, the Lutheran philologist and historian Joachim Camerarius.[72] His extant letters from the period after 1521 are surprisingly free of references to the confessional debate.[73] His reticence or discretion allowed Mutianus Rufus to believe, as late as 1524, that Eobanus was loyal to the Catholic faith. It is perhaps even more significant that Camerarius' biographical sketch is quite sparing in his references to Eobanus' confessional stand. He mentions that Eobanus joined other members of the Erfurt University in welcoming Luther on his way through the city in 1521 and, more ambiguously, that he defended both Erasmus and Luther against attacks by their enemies. Otherwise, however, Camerarius is curiously vague, speaking in code rather than in explicit terms of Eobanus' support for Lutheran doctrine: "Eobanus was a great hater of superstition and loved the truth on account of his straightforward nature and his liberal education. Therefore he admired and cherished the men who in those days dared to oppose the power and barbarism of the monks by professing the truth and asserting the [value of the] humanities." It is notable that Camerarius here joins explicit references to Eobanus' concern for humanism with indirect references to his support for the (evangelical) "truth."[74] In Eobanus' own letters we find much the same emphasis or lack thereof. Career plans and conditions of employment constitute the most significant element in his published correspondence. Where he raises the subject of the confessional debate at all, he does so in the context of its impact on humanistic studies, that is, on his profession. The absence of any expression of concern for the confessional orientation of potential employers is remarkable. In Erfurt, for example, the city council was dominated by Lutherans, the University by Catholics.[75] When Eobanus was offered a chance to return to the university in 1533 after a sojourn in Nürnberg, his only comment on the Catholic party in charge had to do with salary and travel costs. He would not accept the offer of the "papists," he said, "except under clearly spelled out conditions." Similarly, when he received an informal offer from Vienna, where the conservative Archduke Ferdinand would have been his patron, he made no reference to the confessional angle but discussed conditions of employment only.[76] It is clear from these omissions that doctrinal questions were not uppermost in his thoughts, presumably because they did not pose a serious problem for him at that time.

While silence indicated an absence of conflict in Eobanus' case, it represented a conscious act of withdrawal from the scene of conflict in the case of others. Withdrawal, sometimes accompanied by professional reorientation, was an avenue taken by humanists who wished to pursue their researches in peace but whom circumstances no longer allowed to remain neutral. If the prevailing orthodoxy did not ac-

cord with their confessional preferences, they were forced to examine their priorities: Were they willing to sacrifice or endanger their careers by becoming embroiled in religious polemics and disciplinary processes, or was it more important to them to carry on academic research in peace? In the latter case, they had to withdraw from the debate and keep silent. For biblical humanists, this often meant redirecting their research to less controversial subjects.[77] A number of them accordingly reacted to the pressure tactics of the authorities by shifting their professional activities to nontheological subjects that allowed them to keep silent on doctrinal matters. Others ceased publishing altogether. Agrippa commented on this phenomenon in his *Querela*. Intimidation was forcing scholars underground, he said: "They conceal their intellectual pursuits and let the fruit of their research perish, depriving posterity of the benefit."[78] The cases of Maarten van Dorp, Beatus Rhenanus, and Willibald Pirckheimer show how harassment could lead to a strategic withdrawal or reorientation of professional activities.

Maarten van Dorp

The career of the Louvain theologian and humanist Maarten van Dorp (1485–1525) serves as a prime example of this phenomenon. A graduate of the University of Louvain, he taught for many years at the College of the Lily, the most humanistically inclined college in the Faculty of Arts. As a young man he engaged in literary as well as in philosophical studies. He produced an introductory text to Aristotelian logic, but also wrote dialogues based on classical themes, staged performances of classical drama with his students, and even supplied the missing fifth act of Plautus' comedy, *Pot of Gold*. He briskly published a dozen books between 1488 and 1519, then ceased abruptly, and concentrated on teaching and administration instead. The reasons for his withdrawal emerge from two sources: Dorp's own *Apologia*, a document that remained unpublished during his lifetime, and a biography composed shortly after his death by one of his students, Gerard Morinck.[79]

Dorp ran into trouble with the faculty of theology on account of a lecture inaugurating his summer course in July 1516. It was published in 1519 under the title *Oratio in praelectionem epistolarum Divi Pauli*. The oration praised language studies as necessary for the theologian, disparaged scholastic commentaries, and held up as models Valla, Erasmus, and Lefèvre—authors suspected of heterodoxy.[80] Dorp concluded a long diatribe against scholastic theology with the words: "Hurry to the very sources of sacred Scripture, that you may drink the purest water of God's word. Dismiss all sophistical nonsense in which there is no substance, no erudition, nothing that even a pig could like." He praised those learned theologians who neglected human traditions and based their teaching "on God's law, not on law dreamed up by human beings." Colleagues in the theological faculty felt that Dorp's language smacked of Lutheranism. As a result he was suspended. The affair did not end with the reinstatement of his teaching license a year later. The offending oration was reprinted by Froben in Basel (March 1520), prefaced by a letter from Dorp to Erasmus that further aggravated the situation. The letter began with a covert attack on certain Louvain theologians who were critical of Erasmus' works, who were "turning everything upside down in an effort to vex great men who have been of serv-

ice to Christendom." "I promise you," he continued, "I will not be a member of this group." He went on to discuss public reaction to the teaching of Luther, noting that the reformer was enjoying the support of learned men who had written in his defense "explaining and justifying everything with solid scriptural evidence."[81]

The Basel edition of the oration was the last of Dorp's publications. He ceased to publish but not to write. "I am buzzing away in my literary corner," he wrote in 1522 to Francis Craneveldt.[82] He was working "on the customs and rites of the Catholic church: to what extent they are binding or allow for latitude." This was a sensitive topic at a time when the reformers had begun to flaunt Catholic rites. Dorp, made wiser by his experience with the faculty, was no longer willing to court danger by publishing his research. His apologia for the oration that had caused him such difficulties indicates his resolve at the time not to expose his thoughts to an unsympathetic public: "When I consider more closely the sinister fate of the short oration I published, how inauspicious that venture was, how unlucky my genius, I cannot help but draw back from publishing, a venture that is as uncertain as rolling dice." He concluded the apologia, reiterating his determination to keep his writings out of circulation: "If my works are of a character that they cannot see the light without the Graces being angry, let them 'fall on the sponge' like Caesar's *Ajax* did in ancient times."[83]

After 1520 Dorp concentrated on teaching. His biographer, Gerard Morinck, praised Dorp's style of lecturing:

> Others teach; Dorp speaks like Pericles. His words are thunder and lightning. Others lecture; Dorp always held forth and declaimed. Another teacher might be content to insinuate himself into the mind of the listener; Dorp was not content to gently persuade. He opened up the heart of the listener, he broke into his mind. Another man's speech might be slow, indifferent, quiet; Dorp's was rapid, impetuous, direct. The words of another might be learned; Dorp's were touching and full of emotion.[84]

Morinck's flattering remarks exceed the standard of conventional praise. No doubt his enthusiasm was genuine, and Dorp had a vocation to teach. Abandoning scholarly publishing and focusing on teaching instead, he capitalized on his principal talent and seems to have found his professional niche. For the rest of his life Dorp carefully stayed away from the Lutheran debate. In 1523, when he was rector of the university, a young scholar, Gerardus Rivius, requested permission to buy Melanchthon's *Loci Communes*, the sale of which was restricted in Louvain. His mentor, Maarten Lips, advised him that such a request was hopeless: "If I know Dorp, he is too prudent to get involved in the Lutheran business, an unpopular, dubious, and awkward matter. . . . I shall write to him, but it will be to no purpose because Melanchthon belongs to Luther's party." Lips' prediction proved correct. Dorp replied: "Concerning Melanchthon and similar matters I have said neither yea nor nay. Let those look after it, to whom this business has been entrusted. I will not get mixed up in this tragedy."[85] Two letters Dorp wrote to Cranevelt shortly before his death show that he was not indifferent to contemporary debates but preferred to keep his peace. "It is better to grieve in silence . . . and commit matters to God's care, in whose hands are the hearts of kings," he wrote. The second letter betrays the

same mood of resignation. He cuts short his own criticism of the church and of the ologians with the words: "But it is not my task to correct this state of things. Indeed it is not in my capacity. I do the only thing I can do: sigh deeply in my own heart and lay my complaints before God."[86]

Gerard Morinck's biography of Dorp, written shortly after his mentor's death in 1525, throws further light on the motives for Dorp's withdrawal from the public spotlight. Here, as in the case of Beatus Rhenanus' biography of Erasmus, it is interesting to observe the nuances and emphases introduced by an admirer protective of his mentor's reputation. Writing in Catholic Louvain, Morinck denied or at any rate camouflaged Dorp's sympathies for the Reformation. He insisted that Dorp had been "falsely suspected of Lutheranism, for [on his deathbed] he summoned two principal theologians and stated openly that he greatly disapproved of Luther's tenets and wished to die in the Catholic faith, which had been handed down from the apostles to us." In spite of such disclaimers, Morinck was reluctant to publish Dorp's surviving correspondence. He admitted that its content was problematic, "for we sometimes pour into a friend's ear what we would not want to be made public." Among the letters may have been one addressed to Luther, now lost, but acknowledged by the reformer. Writing to Georg Spalatin, Luther mentioned that the "most learned" Dorp, who was apparently sympathetic to his cause, had informed him about the condemnation of his works by the Louvain theologians.[87] Morinck also had to explain why Dorp ceased to publish after his run-in with the faculty of theology, but avoided any speculation beyond saying that it was a prudent move: "Our turbulent and dangerous age taught him to take precautions and to act prudently in many things. His judgment had been honed by experience." This is why he "sung his song to himself and the Muses only." In later years, however, Morinck admitted that he had sanitized Dorp's portrait: "When I composed the biography, I was influenced more by my affection for the man than by regard for the truth." In a confidential letter to a friend he reported that Erasmus, whose advice he had sought at the time, counseled him to suppress the biography. He warned Morinck against whitewashing Dorp's record. It served no purpose to insist that he had never been a Lutheran sympathizer, when there existed evidence to the contrary.[88]

Dorp's inconsistency in the years 1515–1520 earned him a reputation for fickleness. He alternately condemned and praised language studies, supported a reformation of the church, then withdrew from the debate. Erasmus observed at the time that Dorp was "more inconstant than a woman," and Zwingli called him in 1520 "more versatile than an actor's boot." A contemporary satire on the Louvain theologians described him as a man who "once wheedled his way into the company of the Muses, so that when he deserted them he could do them worse harm." After another about-face, he deserted the theologians and was once again "supplicating the Muses, but they won't trust him." The character representing Dorp was named Phenacus ("Cheater") and compared to an octopus.[89] Dorp eventually chose to withdraw completely from the debate, as we have seen, and to refrain from public comment. He had obviously decided that leading an undisturbed life and pursuing his teaching career at the university were more important to him than publicly defending his confessional preferences. Since he died a premature death in 1525, we cannot tell whether reticence would have ensured his peace in the long run.

Beatus Rhenanus

Beatus Rhenanus, historian, translator, and textual critic,[90] furnishes us with another example of a professional shift in the wake of sectarian pressure. A native of Selestat and the descendant of a well-to-do family, Beatus studied at the University of Paris (M.A., 1507), worked as an editor and proofreader for Henri Estienne, and later collaborated with Johannes Gruninger and Matthias Schürer in Strasbourg. In 1511 he moved to Basel to continue his Greek studies and work for the Froben Press, where he was soon entrusted with important duties and responsibilities. He found the circle of humanists associated with the press a congenial group sharing his own interests. He was especially close to Erasmus, who called him his alter ego, and to the Amerbach brothers, Bruno and Basil, who had been his schoolmates in Selestat and Paris.

Beatus favored an Erasmian-style reformation of the church, that is, a reform from within. He wanted to see abuses eliminated and excesses curbed, but held doctrinally conservative views. While he maintained friendly contacts with men who were to become instrumental in the Protestant Reformation—Zwingli, Bucer, Myconius—he suffered from the common misconception that they were persecuted for their humanistic learning. His correspondence from the years 1519–1520 shows that he subscribed to Erasmus' conspiracy theory. He saw the reformers as allies of the humanists and, like them, victimized by scholastic theologians. From 1522 on, however, he watched the growing sectarian violence with apprehension. In his preface to the *Autores historiae ecclesiasticae* (1523), a collection of patristic historical texts, he lamented the religious controversies of his day and invited his contemporaries to learn from history, especially from the Arian controversy: "We should think deeply about what we are reading, lest we become involved in similar difficulties through our overly stubborn contentions. The Arian controversy could have been settled at an early stage. How much blood was spilled on both sides, when the battle was protracted! Plautus spoke the truth when he said: Fortunate are those who learn from the experience of others."[91]

In 1528 Beatus left Basel, then on the brink of embracing the Reformation, and returned to Catholic Selestat. At the same time the focus of his publications changed from patristic to secular historiographical texts.[92] He had used the patristic editions as a vehicle to promote the reformation of the church. The reorientation of his research indicates that he wished to distance himself from the Reformation debate. The animated discussion of the reformers' initiatives, which had filled his letters in the early 1520s, ceased.[93] Revisions he introduced in successive editions of Tertullian (first published in 1521) suggest that he became more conservative in his doctrinal views or at any rate wanted to avoid conflict. The first edition contained an appendix (*Admonitio*) discussing passages that were controversial, especially in the context of the Reformation debate. Among them were Tertullian's comments on confession and papal primacy. Exploring the history of penitential rites, Beatus had assigned priority to public over private penance and used the opportunity to cite Oecolampadius' attack on the "superstitious" confessional practices of his day. On papal authority he had said that it was "not as great [in the early church] as it has come to be today." In Tertullian's time the Roman church was one among the apos-

tolic churches but not the only apostolic church. He noted that Tertullian did not call it *summa*, or "supreme" church. "If Tertullian lived today, he would not speak thus with impunity. What tragic fuss they raise about similar matters now, as I am preparing this edition!"[94] Such comments were liable to being interpreted as "Lutheran." By 1539, when the third edition of Tertullian appeared, Beatus had shifted to a more conservative, decidedly Catholic, position. Whereas he had earlier criticized the investigations of scholastic theologians, he now added a comment on their usefulness "in preserving the unity of teaching." He eliminated the reference to Oecolampadius, now head of the reformed church in Basel. Instead, he expanded a reference to the famous preacher Johann Geiler of Kaisersberg, who had likewise criticized overly scrupulous confessional practices but whose orthodoxy had never been questioned.[95] On the whole, Beatus' revisions were designed to eliminate any radical critique and replace it with the language of appeasement. Thus he deleted the section dealing with the term *summa* and inserted a passage emphasizing the importance of accepting Rome's supreme authority to preserve the unity of the church: "Our turbulent times demonstrate abundantly how much the ever-lasting authority of this church benefited the Christian world by keeping the unity of teaching intact and preserving peace everywhere."[96] His understanding of the historical process led Beatus to adopt a relativist position vis-à-vis church doctrine and ceremonies. The lack of absolute criteria in turn led him to accept the need for authority in the final decision-making process. In this respect his position resembles that of Erasmus' Christian skepticism. Like Erasmus, moreover, he advises scholars to conduct their investigations in the spirit of prudence and let piety circumscribe their research and temper their findings.[97]

Four years after Beatus' death the Strasbourg educator Johann Sturm published a biography that served as an introduction to a revised edition of the *Rerum Germanicarum Libri* (1555). Sturm, who had not known his subject personally, composed the biography on the basis of interviews with Beatus' friends. As biographical convention dictated, he gave Beatus generous praise for his learning, but he was not entirely uncritical. He noted that Beatus was by nature retiring. The desire for peace and quiet kept him aloof from the confessional debate, Sturm said. He concluded that Beatus had been a clandestine supporter of the Reformation: "He usually refrained from giving his own opinion, although it is agreed that he was inclined toward the more sincere religion."[98] In this interpretation Sturm was perhaps following the lead of the Strasbourg preacher Caspar Hedio, who said that Beatus "no doubt loved the true religion, although he conformed to the practices of his native city." Hedio opined that Beatus was imitating Erasmus' practice, "perhaps following his view that a prudent man should not fight the conventions of his age."[99] Beatus in turn had counseled others to keep their opinions to themselves and avoid becoming victims of violence. In September 1524 he wrote to Hummelberger: "So far you have taken the side of Luther, as have all good men . . . but when matters reached a pitch of madness and it came to grievous and insane altercations, I know that you kept your opinion to yourself, because you are a prudent man. . . . so I need not warn you that one must act cautiously and circumspectly in this wretched tumult."[100] Beatus kept his own advice, withdrawing from the debate and opting for a reorientation of his research that allowed him to avoid controversial theological subjects.

Willibald Pirckheimer

The descendant of a prominent Nürnberg family, Willibald Pirckheimer favored Luther in the early days of his rise to prominence.[101] In public he expressed his support rather discreetly, but private letters paint a picture of more radical leanings. When Hutten congratulated him on "suffering injury from the Roman party," Pirckheimer gently corrected him. He assured Hutten that he was honored to be regarded an enemy of the papists, but indicated that he was not willing to suffer by acknowledging his orientation openly. He explained that discretion was necessary in view of his position on the council: "I am born in a free city, but I am not completely free. I must obey our city council."[102]

In 1519 it was Pirckheimer's misfortune to make a bitter enemy of Johann Eck, one of the most vocal Catholic apologists. At that time the satire *Eck Planed Down*, which has already been mentioned in connection with Scheurl, began to circulate. It was a crude piece, gleefully describing a series of tortures "to plane down" or smooth out Eck's alleged intellectual and moral faults. The anonymous skit was attributed to Pirckheimer. Rumors of his authorship persisted in spite of his denials.[103] Eck soon saw a chance to take his revenge on the supposed author. When he was commissioned to publish the papal bull condemning Luther and authorized to include in the ban known Lutheran sympathizers, he appended Pirckheimer's name. A diplomatic dance began. The Nürnberg council, for whom the matter was politically embarrassing and potentially incapacitating, attempted to clear Pirckheimer's name. They approached the local ecclesiastical and secular authorities for help. Both expressed a willingness to cooperate, but their intervention was rejected by Eck, who insisted that the matter was within his exclusive jurisdiction. The council accordingly sent a representative to tender Pirckheimer's recantation to Eck in Ingolstadt, but the latter made things difficult, questioning the legal authority of the representative and complaining furthermore that the recantation was not unequivocal. Pirckheimer now dispatched a duly authorized notary to negotiate with Eck on his behalf. In the meantime, however, the customary period for submitting recantations had passed, and the bull had been returned to Rome. Pirckheimer's name remained attached, designating him a recalcitrant Lutheran. He was forced to take his case to the papal court in Rome, where his sworn statement of loyalty to the Catholic church was finally accepted and the ban rescinded—all this, of course, at great expense. In the intervening years, however, Lutheran sympathizers had come to dominate the Nürnberg council. In 1525 the city officially installed reformed preachers. Ironically, therefore, Pirckheimer's sworn statement that he was an orthodox Catholic and abhorred Luther's teachings once again put him at odds with the city and obliged him to resign from the council. In the following years he carried on a bitter fight against the city's reforming policies and in 1526 became involved in the Eucharistic controversy, defending the Catholic position against Oecolampadius. This was his last published contribution to Reformation controversies. Thereafter he withdrew from the debate, although extant manuscripts show that he continued to research and write about doctrinal matters.

In his autobiography Pirckheimer avoids the subject of the confessional debate and his personal involvement in it. The brief sketch, of which an autograph still ex-

ists, was first printed as an introduction to his *Opera Omnia*. This was apparently the purpose for which it had been designed. Like Erasmus' *Compendium vitae* it is an "official" biography written in the third person and presenting Pirckheimer in the light in which he wished to be remembered by the public. He wished to be remembered as a patrician, a soldier, and a scholar.[104] References to the Reformation debate are so discreet that readers unfamiliar with the circumstances could not possibly understand the point of his remarks. He vaguely refers to a "growing faction on council, whose leader was a close friend of Willibald." This man (Kaspar Nützel)[105] entered a conspiracy in the hope of monetary gain "for he was constrained by a large number of offspring and a lack of means." Turning from a friend into an enemy, he caused a great deal of trouble for Pirckheimer, who stood firm and "could not be turned aside from the path of truth, by either love or hate, threats, force or pressure." In the end, however, the psychological burden became too much for him, "so that he decided to lay down all public responsibilities to free himself from these faithless people and most burdensome affairs." Nützel tried to retain his exclusive legal services for the city. This was a trap, however. His aim was to keep Pirckheimer from giving legal advice to his friends. More to the point, accepting a stipend from the city would have prevented him from representing the interests of his sisters, whose convents were threatened by the city's Protestant agenda.[106] In a last oblique reference to the affair that cost him his position on the council, Pirckheimer asserts that he "was unmoved by these matters. Putting all his hopes in God and his own innocence, he never turned aside from the path of truth and justice. He lived a private life, enjoyed his studies, and in the meantime worked diligently, counseling his friends and people in need. And it happened frequently that Pirckheimer protected most efficiently those people whom that plotter tried to hold down." The struggle robbed Pirckheimer of his peace of mind. In an observation that anticipates the findings of modern psychologists, he commented on the psychosomatic effects of stress: "He contracted this illness [arthritis] as a result of emotional suffering (*animi passione*) rather than any propensity to drink; for, although he kept up his spirits in the face of the injuries, insults, and intrigues he suffered at the hands of his enemies, he could not completely cope with them. Their frequent and bitter attacks struck deeply and penetrated his very entrails."[107]

Pirckheimer's letters offer explanations for his changed attitude toward the reformers, but even they leave blanks to be filled in. In 1529 he wrote an apologetic letter to Kilian Leib:

> I won't deny that in the beginning I thought that there was some substance in Luther's teachings. At that time no good man could rest content seeing the many errors and deceptions that had gradually crept into the Christian religion. I was hoping therefore, as others did too, that some remedy could be found for these ills. I was greatly deceived, however. For the old errors have not been uprooted, and new errors have been introduced that are much harder to bear and make the others appear laughable. Thus I began gradually to distance myself, and the more closely I observed everything, the more clearly I recognized the snares of the ancient snake. In consequence I was (and still am) being attacked by a great many people. They inveigh against me, making me out a deserter of the evangelical truth, because the liberty taken by apostates, male and female, totally displeases me. This is not evan-

> gelical but diabolical freedom, to say nothing of innumerable other vices which have all but extinguished charity and religion. The bold and aggressive language Luther uses does not at all conceal what he has in his heart. Indeed he seems to be quite mad or driven by an evil demon.[108]

Pirckheimer expressed the same sentiments a year later in a letter to the imperial architect, Johann Tschertte. The teachings of the Lutherans were at variance with their actions: "If you hear them talk so sweetly about their faith and the sacred gospel, you'd think it was pure gold that was shining forth, but it is only brass." They were no better than their papist predecessors; indeed, "these evangelical rascals make the other rascals look good. . . . They deceived us with their glitter and artifice; the evangelicals evidently want to introduce shameful and criminal practices and blind with words people, who have eyes to see, saying that one cannot judge by works, although Christ has taught us otherwise." How could the city council of Nürnberg embrace such a creed? Pirckheimer suggests that they, like many others including himself, were deceived. "They expected a great deal of improvement, but found little. Also, there are many on council—indeed the most honourable men—who are not pleased with what is happening. Yet they acquiesce in it out of embarrassment more than any other reason, for they don't want to appear to have been wrong in some respects." Pirckheimer himself had changed his mind about the evangelicals, but his criticism of the reformers should not be interpreted as approval of papist practices. He was as critical as ever of Catholic abuses, but he no longer saw the reformers as saviors: "I am writing this, not because I can or want to praise the pope, his priests and monks, for I know their actions are not good and in many ways shameful, and certainly in need of reform . . . yet the papists are at least united among themselves, whereas those who call themselves evangelicals, are very much at odds and divided into sects. . . . May God preserve us from such teaching, for where it goes, there can be no peace, quiet, or concord."[109]

While disillusionment explains Pirckheimer's reversal of opinion in part, practical considerations may also have come into play. Their extent can be seen from the attitude he displayed in an affair that exposed his sister Caritas to the barbs of Reformation polemicists. At this time (1522) Pirckheimer clearly wished to avoid controversy and confrontation. The concern he showed for his position vis-à-vis the council and his lack of a corresponding concern for his sister's feelings show Pirckheimer in a most unflattering light.

Caritas Pirckheimer, abbess of the Clares in Nürnberg from 1503 until her death in 1532, was a remarkable woman, combining learning with a devout spirit and a forceful personality.[110] The *Denkwürdigkeiten*, an autobiographical account of the years 1524–1528, relates the difficulties resulting for her convent from the decision of the Nürnberg council to embrace the Reformation. Her efforts to maintain Catholic discipline among her charges was impeded by the council's policy of facilitating the laization of nuns and their prohibition against accepting new postulants. Their policy was promoted by Lutheran preachers newly affiliated with the convents. Caritas resisted their proselytizing efforts and vigorously fought against the council's policy. Her letters to the authorities are well argued and politically shrewd. They betray a fine sense of irony and a rare combination of practical un-

derstanding and piety. Her correspondence was mostly in German, but occasionally she displayed her knowledge of Latin, considered by many at the time a skill unsuited for a woman and in particular a nun. It was this linguistic accomplishment that gave her enemies a handle for personal attack. In 1522 she wrote a long letter to the Catholic apologist Hieronymus Emser, chaplain of Duke George of Saxony, complaining about the situation in Nürnberg and speaking approvingly of his opposition to Luther. The city was "poisoned by heretical errors, primarily by the fault of its councillors," she wrote. "Four years ago the spiritual life in this noble Christian city was so rich that it could not have been led, even with sword-strikes and gunshots, to the point where unfortunately words alone have brought her now."[111] A copy of the letter fell into the hands of the printer Wolfgang Stockel and was published in 1523 with snide marginal remarks that attacked not only Caritas' confessional position but also her personal integrity. The fact that she had manifested her learning by inserting Latin passages into the German letter evoked ridicule and her innocent relationship with Emser was turned into material for coarse jokes.[112] The edition was discreditable and in bad taste, and Emser reacted accordingly. He called it "the deed of rascals, who pour forth one shameful book after another against God, honour, and law, against the decrees of His Imperial Majesty and the order of the whole Empire." Why did the reformers not refute his books or those of other Catholic apologists like Cochlaeus or Faber instead of defaming a woman of good repute with their lies and insinuations? "Can you not begin your new confession except by violating divine and brotherly love? Do you call that evangelical—to betray and sell your neighbor?"[113] One would have expected Pirckheimer to come to the aid of his sister as well. Instead, he berated Caritas for her involvement in the Reformation debate and expressed his displeasure with Emser for permitting the letter to fall into the publisher's hands: "I wish you had acted more prudently, and she more cautiously," he wrote to Emser. His letter clearly indicates that he was more concerned at the time with his position on the council than with his sister's difficulties. He acknowledged that he had a duty to come to her aid, but evidently felt no sympathy and emphasized that she was the author of her own misfortunes. He was sensitive to the fact that her letter implied criticism of the council: "If only she had not criticized the council, the matter could easily have been settled." His own situation was delicate, he pointed out. The case against him in the papal court was still unresolved.[114]

When the council turned Protestant and Pirckheimer's discretion proved in vain, he threw caution to the winds and entered the Reformation debate with a polemic against Oecolampadius. After this burst of anger, however, he withdrew from the fray. A satire and a work concerning remarriage, directed against Oecolampadius, are extant in manuscript, but remained unpublished.[115] Unlike Beatus Rhenanus and Dorp, however, Pirckheimer did not conceal his confessional loyalties, even though they were unpopular in Nürnberg.

The three cases illustrate the professional shifts forced on humanists, who yearned for personal security or the undisturbed pursuit of their scholarly interests. Their motives for withdrawing from the debate appear to be a mixture of practical concerns and a genuine desire for peace. Although suspicions remain in Beatus' and

Dorp's case that they concealed their true sympathies, there is no firm proof that they were Nicodemites. Their cases differ by degrees from those of other men who had clearly abandoned Catholic doctrine but awaited more favorable conditions to make the break official. The practice and defense of Nicodemism is the subject of the next chapter.

The Nicodemism of Men of Letters

By the mid-1520s many who had been enthusiastic about Luther at first had sober second thoughts when they saw the social and political upheaval caused by his self-declared followers. The reformers were widely held responsible for the tumultuous state of affairs in the Empire, but individual analyses of the cause-and-effect relationship range from sophisticated to simplistic, from ideological to mundane. While Konrad Adelmann, a canon at Augsburg, saw the painful progress of the Reformation as divine punishment and foresaw no settlement until "we improve our morals and take refuge in our heavenly father," Kilian Leib, prior of the canonry at Rebdorf, contemplated the situation in terms of food prices. "The sea that brought us Luther has been inclement to us, as you can see from this calculation: forty years ago [he wrote in 1546], when Christians obeyed the Roman church and ate fish instead of meat during Lent, a *dunna* of fish could be bought for six florins. Now they are twelve florins." Other goods—pepper, cinnamon, meat, wool—had all doubled in price, he wrote. "And these are the results of the doctrine, which they brag is the purer one."[1]

Although Leib's train of thought is rather peculiar, there can be no doubt that material considerations affected confessional choices. Georg Witzel declared that "some are on the Catholic side because they derive their living from that source. If they could be rich *and* sectarian, or if they could at any rate enjoy a greater fortune as sectarians, they would not remain one day longer among the Catholics."[2] Wolfgang Capito, himself suspected of mercenary motives, acknowledged that calculating people could be found in both religious camps. There were "many false papists and evil *Lutheristen* who, under the guise of gospel teaching, are hoping for loot."[3] While Capito denied that he was susceptible to bribes, the papal legate, Girolamo Aleandro, felt certain that a reward would "shackle" him to the Catholic Church. He advised officials of the Roman curia "to attempt at the outset to win him over with a favor from Rome, and especially through the provostship [which Capito was seeking at the time]. Once this favor is granted, I am sure that he will be ours. Even if he is not entirely ours, he will at any rate harm the Catholic cause less, if only with a view to his own interest and to keeping the provostship, since the Lutherans want to eliminate all ecclesiastical benefices."[4] Erasmus, as we have seen, was frequently accused of this type of Nicodemism, which in his case remained unproven.[5] Rumors that Catholic authorities were trying to bribe Luther circulated before the Diet of Worms. In a letter to the Roman court, Aleandro reported that the Elector of Sax-

ony, "that basilisk, said . . . he knew very well that the Pope would make Luther an archbishop or cardinal, if he recanted."[6] Some people suggested that the reformers employed similar methods, trying to lure the uncommitted into their camp. Once in power, Protestant city councils used the carrot-and-stick method, Konrad Adelmann wrote, adding that he and his fellow canons at Augsburg were immune to such tactics. When they were expelled from the cathedral chapter in 1538, he said: "Our adversaries were hoping that we would value temporal goods so highly that we would depart from the one Catholic church and its sacraments (may God in his mercy protect us from such a thought!), for there is no salvation without them. . . . Let the heretics rave as much as they want, they will never accomplish this."[7]

Hints or outright accusations that monetary gain and career opportunities had motivated people's confessional choice or, conversely, kept them from openly avowing their beliefs are a common feature of the polemical literature of the time. In our context it is significant to note that some reformers, among them Calvin, associated Nicodemism with humanism. Calvin published a number of pamphlets and treatises on the subject.[8] In *Excuse aux Nicodemites* (1546) he developed a typology of the Nicodemite. He distinguished four motives for the concealment of beliefs: financial gain; career ambitions; nonchalance; and fear or pusillanimity. Nonchalance, he said, was the besetting fault of *quasi tout de gens de lettres*, practically all men of letters. They dismissed ceremonies as unimportant: *comme chose dont on ne se peut passer*. They preferred to remain on the sideline of the religious debate: *sans s'en entremesler ny empecher, comme si cela n'estoit de leur office*; indeed, they ridiculed more serious-minded men: *se moquent de ceux qui le font, et les arguent d'inconsideration*.[9] Similar attempts at typecasting humanists as nonchalant mockers can be found in letters Calvin addressed to the French humanists Duchemin and Roussel (published in 1537). Here Calvin pointed out the difference between theological and humanistic modes of expression, associating Nicodemism with the latter. He stressed that his own writings were of the first kind. They contained serious moral counsel; they were not rhetorical exercises and must not be received "as if a story were related by a poet or a declamation by an orator, which is sufficiently acknowledged by applause and compliments." Rather, Calvin was addressing himself to his readers as a theologian, giving them "precepts for life, for which one can show approval in only one way: by obeying them. And let them regard this doctrine as the Word of God, which they will not mock with impunity."[10] Here, too, humanists (addressed under the heading of poets and orators) are seen as scoffers, who do not take the Word of God seriously and look on preaching as an opportunity to practice oratory. In the tract *On Scandals* (1550) Calvin again targetted humanists, objecting to the same two features: their treatment of sacred discourse as literature and their mocking attitude toward believers. They were "arrogant men, given to verbal pomp," he said; men who took offense at the "common and lowly form of speech found in Scripture" and "intellectuals who laugh at our simplicity, because we embrace with certainty what lacks proof." Calvin cautioned his readers against such "Lucianic" scoffers, referring by name to the humanists Agrippa of Nettesheim, Etienne Dolet, and François Rabelais. A few years earlier Justus Menius had accused the humanist Crotus Rubeanus of Nicodemism, describing him in similar terms. He accused him of "dissimulating" and "skillfully concealing that interior Crotus." He was outwardly

conforming to Catholic rites, "saying Salve Regina in church, entering the church in procession behind the standards, the cross, and the aspergillum, but in your heart you play games and laugh at the pope together with his court." Anticipating Calvin's typology of the Nicodemite intellectual as indifferent to religion and mocking devout believers, Menius described Crotus Rubeanus as a man who "never lost sleep" over religious questions, who preferred "to laugh and have a good time with his friends and amuse himself with jokes rather than be bothered with those public causes that went on and on and were bad for your health."[11]

The type of accusation Calvin brought against men of letters had earlier been raised against Erasmus and likewise been connected with his learning.[12] In 1523, for example, Erasmus Alber accused Erasmus of dissimulation, concluding that this lack of veracity was a by-product of his erudition. "He does not dare to profess openly [that the Pope is the Antichrist] and is still dissembling," Alber wrote. "Behold, these are the fruits of philosophy. The apostle warns us against philosophy, and yet this comely and deceitful whore has seduced many splendid minds. O wretched Erasmus, who cannot see in the darkness of such human wisdom!"[13] We have seen that Erasmus also served as a model for humanists wishing to remain aloof from the confessional debate, a feature criticized as "Nicodemite" by Calvin, who insisted that "men who remain neutral are false Nicodemites, thinking they alone are wise and able to maintain their position by withdrawing from contention."[14] Calvin became entangled in a controversy with Joris Cassander, because the Belgian humanist had supported the Erasmian idea of remaining above the parties, declaring that he did not wish to be "addicted to one party in a way that impedes free and unbiased judgment." There were two religious parties, Cassander had noted: "anti-Catholics," that is, Lutherans and Calvinists, who wanted the old church "ruined and torn apart" rather than reformed; and "pseudo-Catholics," or papists, who acknowledged its corruption but "nevertheless wanted the church to remain completely as it is" and were impervious to change. "Between these parties which are predominant in the church today, there is a third group of people." Cassander's "third group" seemed to fit Calvin's definition of "Nicodemites." They remained "hidden and obscure; and although they are forced to belong to one or the other party, they have not given their hearts to either. They embrace what is right on both sides and agrees with the Catholic faith and practice and reject what is contrary to them or immoderate and excessive (as is often the case in controversies)."[15] Calvin rose to the bait and took up the pen against Cassander, accusing him of "histrionics more suited to monkeys than men" and rejecting his advice as *flexuosas ambages*, soft and ambiguous words, a phrase earlier used by Luther to characterize Erasmus' approach.[16] In his rebuttal of Calvin's accusations, Cassander did not conceal his Erasmian roots, citing the humanist to corroborate his own views.[17]

We see here a gradual convergence of perceptions. Humanists were frequently depicted as Lucianic scoffers; as men who cared more about style than about substance; who lacked commitment and were advocates of neutrality. Calvin attributed some of the same characteristics to Nicodemites. It was easy therefore to establish an equivalence leading to the conclusion that humanists were likely candidates for Nicodemism.[18] A closer examination of the lives and careers of Urbanus Rhegius and Wolfgang Capito, two humanist "Nicodemites," in the

sense in which the term was used by Calvin, may help to clarify the reasons for the perceived link.

Urbanus Rhegius

Urbanus Rhegius (1489–1541) studied at the universities of Freiburg im Breisgau and Ingolstadt, where he became a disciple of Johann Eck.[19] He graduated M.A. in 1516 and began to teach poetry and rhetoric. A year later, he was crowned poet laureate by the Emperor Maximilian. In 1519 he entered the priesthood and received a living at Constance. His first theological work, *On the Dignity of Priests* (1519), was largely a collection of biblical and patristic quotations to illustrate the holiness of the clerical office and the obligations it imposes on the holder. The work shows Rhegius' humanistic roots. In a lengthy digression he lashes out against boorish priests who defend their ignorance and their unwillingness to learn by deprecating the liberal arts: "They think it is monstrous if anyone studies the writings of poets or pagan philosophers preliminary to higher disciplines. They believe that the conjunction of eloquence and wisdom is a Chimaera or a monster half-horse, half-man, but if we understand the true method of teaching, the two disciplines cannot and should not be separated. . . . Literature does not impede higher studies, but aids them; it does not hinder greater efforts, but helps them." This was a humanist's creed. Rhegius illustrated his ideal with a long list of names—men who combined piety with learning—headed by Erasmus and including his teachers Ulrich Zasius and Johann Eck, as well as Reuchlin, Mutianus Rufus, Wolfgang Capito, Beatus Rhenanus, and the Amerbach brothers. "They are fools therefore, who would want to restrict human nature to a small compass, when it is capable of many arts."[20]

Rhegius maintained close ties with his humanist friends, but focused on theology in his studies and published work. He continued his studies at Tübingen and Basel, where he obtained in 1520 the theological doctorate needed to assume his new post as cathedral preacher in Augsburg. His mentors at the time were his former teacher Eck and Johann Fabri, suffragan bishop of Constance, whom he helped to gather material for a refutation of Luther's doctrine. These associations seem to place him firmly in the Catholic camp, but the evidence is not unequivocal. Johann Botzheim assured Zasius that his former pupil was averse to Luther; in March 1520, however, he conveyed Rhegius' greetings to Luther and commended him in these words: "You should regard him an even closer friend because he has come to love you, not on a sudden impulse but as a result of considered opinion."[21] It is likely that this was the message Rhegius asked Botzheim to convey, for the words recur in an autobiographical letter of 1533. In this retrospective Rhegius comments on his conversion. He tells his (unidentified) addressee that he "was stuck rather deeply in the papist camp" but that he realized his predicament. "I had other temptations to contend with in the beginning, but through God's grace they ceased." Switching from German to Latin he continues:[22] "I did not enter on this doctrine on a sudden impulse, but on the basis of considered opinion, that is, after I had earned my doctorate and read scholastic and patristic theology. I came to it, not casually, but deliberately." He used the same formula in a letter fragment printed in his *Opera*, describ-

ing his feelings for Luther as "love based on considered opinion."[23] From the verbal parallels between Botzheim's letter and Urbanus' autobiographical statements, one gathers that his conversion to Lutheranism occurred shortly after 1520.

Whatever his inclinations at that time, Rhegius' public actions remained strictly conformist. In his capacity as cathedral preacher he promulgated the ban against Luther. In private, however, he wrote a poem celebrating Luther's burning of the bull and a satire in which he condemned Rome's action as self-serving.[24] Both pieces appeared anonymously. The title of the satire sums up its contents: "Symon Hessus Explains to Doctor Martin Luther Why the Lutheran Books Were Burned by the Men of Cologne and Louvain." Symon, purportedly a member of the household of the papal protonotary, explains in deadpan fashion that Luther's books were "not only harmful to the Christian doctrine but would also considerably curtail the income of the Roman See." The papal court, however, was like the imperial court. Its upkeep was expensive and it could not do without income from dispensations and indulgences. "Would you want the pope to pasture his sheep and not taste their milk?" The pope, he said, had taken the advice of Johann Eck (who is mentioned repeatedly and depicted as boorish and greedy), Cajetan, and Silvester, and "what the three headmen of the theologians reject, must be rejected," and what the pope does not like "must be heretical in Rome." Even if many people thought Luther was right, no one could help him but God. Most Christians realized that the church was in need of reform but meekly suffered the Roman tyranny, considering it God's punishment for their sins. "If you were of this opinion, they would bear with you." Indulgences, in particular, could not possibly be given up because of the income they produced. Rome was angry with Luther for giving away their secret, namely, that there was nothing in Scripture about indulgences and that they had been invented "to impoverish and deceive the Germans."[25]

Some of the tongue-in-cheek advice to Luther betrays Rhegius' humanistic sympathies. The scholastics, Symon Hessus says, are misleading the people concerning the evangelical truth, perhaps not purposely, but because they lack a knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. The opponents of Luther were now trying to suppress language studies, "for languages make bold fellows who scorn Thomas, Scotus, and doctors like them; and through language studies they can penetrate deep into Scripture and research things in great detail." It was in the interest of the Roman See that "Germans read nothing but the decretal" and stuck with medieval books on grammar and rhetoric. "If they had not shown such concern for the Greek language, Scripture, Paul, Jerome, and the writers of old, they would still be piously corrupt and obedient to the pope." Another mistake of Luther's was to be "such a pagan as to scorn the philosophy of Aristotle, without which no one can become a great theologian." The writer was prepared to parade some of his scholastic arguments, but "the Wittenbergers can't understand them because no one there learns the Copulata of Cologne." He relied on the scholastic theologians of Cologne and Louvain to combat the heretics, "to bring out their lapidary arguments, and if they are not effective, at least to burn the heretical books."[26]

In a dialogue appended to Symon Hessus' message, *Frag und antwort Symonis Hessi und Martini Lutheri . . .* (Question and Answer of Symon Hessus and Martin Luther), the satirical purpose is all but abandoned. Symon appears to be sympa-

thetic toward Luther. He deprecates the Catholic apologist Johann Cochleus and covertly refers to himself in the third person as a man "whom Eck tried to scare with his Roman thunderclaps, but that did not move Regius." Here Symon Hessus quite forgets the role he has been playing earlier on, declaring that he "is glad that Christ is growing in the hearts of the people through the good sermons preached in the imperial city of Augsburg."[27] Speaking as a member of the humanistic circle, Symon Hessus tells Luther that his enemies claim that "only poets have written on his behalf." Martin asks who is meant by "poets." Hessus enlightens him that boorish men "perhaps call those 'poets' who are skilled in Latin and Greek, in which many today are well instructed. They have the appropriate skill in languages and other skills as well. Among them are Erasmus of Rotterdam, Philip Melanchthon, Hummelberger, Oecolampadius, Urbanus Regius, Sapidus, Hutten, Eugentinus, and others. But boorish writers call them 'poets' as if they had no other skill than making verses and writing letters. . . . Indeed, Erasmus has written a book, 'Compendium of theology,' that has more true theology in it than all the books Eck has cobbled together."[28]

The tracts confirm that Urbanus was an Erasmian humanist and a Lutheran sympathizer in 1521. It is questionable, however, whether he fully understood the radical nature of Luther's teaching. He did not recognize (or, at any rate, did not acknowledge) its schismatic nature. In another work published in 1521 under the pseudonym Phoeniceus von Roschach, entitled *Anzeigung, dass die römische Bulle merklichen Schaden..gebracht habe und nicht Doktor Luthers Lehr* (Notice That the Roman Bull Rather Than the Teaching of Doctor Luther Has Caused Considerable Damage), he claimed that Luther was not attacking church hierarchy in principle but merely the worldliness of the prelates. He conceded that Luther accepted only two sacraments proper but insisted that it was not his intention to abolish ("uffheben," "verwerfen") the rest. People who accused Luther of being against the priesthood, he said, failed to understand that he was merely fighting abuses; and it was a lie to say that Luther wanted to abolish auricular confession. In short, according to Rhegius, Luther was not introducing a new theology but merely rescuing genuine theology from scholastic accretions and corruptions.[29]

Although Rhegius published the pamphlets anonymously and outwardly conformed with Catholic practices, his sermons gave away his leanings.[30] His position became untenable, and he was obliged to resign his post in October 1521. In a letter to his friend Wolfgang Rychard, extant in manuscript only, he agonized over the outcome of his actions. He indicated that he had the support of many members of the congregation: "If I had indulged my passion, I could have incited the whole city against the priests in my farewell speech . . . but I cast the blame for my departure on my own head."[31] Why did Rhegius blame himself? It appears that his Lutheranizing sermons were not the only reason for his forced resignation. A weakness for women may have played a role as well. The "other temptations" to which Urbanus refers in the autobiographical letter of 1533 were perhaps of a sexual nature. In his letter to Rychard explaining the circumstances of his resignation, he mentions that he had been accused of "being more popular with women than was good." His behavior scandalized some members of his congregation. The chronicler Wilhelm Rem relates an incident in which Rhegius' sermon was interrupted by a female heckler, who accused him of visiting private houses and "making love to the burghers'

wives." Another member of the congregation cut her short, calling her a liar and taunting her: "You would like it if someone made love to you, but they don't want you."[32]

Deprived of his livelihood, Rhegius cast around for another position and tried to establish useful connections. A fawning letter to Erasmus in January 1522 depicts his departure from Augsburg as temporary. He flatters Erasmus as the "prime author of the revival of theology in our own time. You were the first to recall the theologians from the muddy pools of scholasticism to the sacred fount of Scripture, and that too in such modest terms that your reproof, so salutary and so badly needed, gave no offence even to your enemies, except for a few hooting owls."[33] Another, similarly flattering, letter to Zwingli congratulates the reformer on his evangelical zeal. In the letter to Erasmus, Rhegius is discreet about his own theological position and his Lutheran sympathies. To Zwingli, he merely says that he "has suffered for the gospel."[34] In contemporary letters to Rychard, however, he is more candid about his increasing alienation from the Catholic church, which, he said, was "enveloped in the darkness of many errors." In his correspondence with Rychard, as well as in a letter to Vadianus, he compliments Luther, speaking of him as "our theologian."[35]

In spite of his growing commitment to Luther, Rhegius accepted a position as preacher in Hall, a Tirolean village in the domain of the Emperor's brother, Archduke Ferdinand, a champion of the Old Church. Rhegius replaced Jacob Strauss, a popular evangelical preacher, who had been dismissed for his pro-Lutheran stand.[36] Undeterred by his predecessor's fate, Rhegius continued preaching against church abuses. In one sermon he derided the practice of placing holy images at the church door to solicit donations: "The poor, innocent, wooden idols must serve as money-mongers (Geldkautzen). They are hung with letters of indulgence like a pilgrim with St. James' shells; and a monk sits behind them, like a hunter of birds in his blind." Here, as in his Augsburg sermons, Rhegius combined criticism of church abuses with declarations of orthodoxy: "Not that I condemn the right use of images, but it is unchristian to let poor people—our brothers and sisters—perish, while we spend good money freely on useless things." On another occasion, he preached on the observance of feast days: "The Jewish observance of feast days serves no good purpose. You must celebrate in a holier spirit, not with external works, like Jews, but also internally." He used the occasion to condemn the commercialization of religion. There were people appointed by the papal court, he said,

> quick when money is at stake, useless when it comes to preaching. They have their eye on rich livings. If one becomes available, they can smell it, like vultures a carcass from several miles away. They enter the parish and occupy the post and talk of the pope's authority, so that everyone must fall silent. In Rome the man may have been a donkey driver, a fool, but in Germany he is regarded a lord. He does not have enough learning to pasture the Lord's flock himself. He therefore hires the next person who comes along, haggling with him and skinning him. And if the poor vicar wants to pay his pension, he must play financial games with the peasants or sell his cow with the calf.[37]

Rhegius' sermons became increasingly radical. During Lent of 1523 he preached a sermon on confession, in which he encouraged "repentance, confession, and penance according to Scripture, not human prescriptions." Nevertheless he counseled his parishioners to follow traditional Catholic practice voluntarily.[38] All his sermons contained escape clauses, which allowed him to maintain that he was fighting against corruption rather than the authority of the church. Predictably Rhegius' sermons came to the attention of Archduke Ferdinand. He was obliged to withdraw to Augsburg, where he waited out the storm.[39]

At the time Rhegius still lacked the necessary resolve to declare himself openly for Luther. He was even prepared "to justify all [his] actions before the bishops," and returned to Hall in July 1523, resuming his preaching.[40] It was clear, however, where his loyalties lay. Eck denounced him to the Holy See, asking pointedly: "Why is the Lutheran preacher Urbanus Rhegius tolerated in the town of Hall in the duchy of Tirol?" A chronicle reported that Tirol was infected with the Lutheran heresy in 1523: "Urban Reger, a Lutheran preacher, was accompanied into the parish church at Hall by armed supporters to give his sermon there."[41] Over the next year Rhegius repeatedly traveled to Augsburg, now governed by a council sympathetic to Luther, in an effort to lay the foundation for a career independent of the Catholic church. In the fall of 1524, when he had secured his objective, he departed Hall for good. His marriage in Augsburg in June 1525 made his transition to the reformed church official. Rhegius' further career took him to Lüneberg-Wolfenbüttel, where he entered the service of Duke Ernest and as superintendent introduced the Reformation in Lüneburg and Hannover.

Two biographical sketches from the sixteenth century contain no reference to the process of Rhegius' conversion to Lutheranism and his "underground" life. Rhegius' first biographer was his son Ernst Regius [sic], who prefaced an edition of his collected works, *Opera Urbani Regii Latine edita* (Nürnberg, 1562), with a short Life. As is to be expected, it is an exercise in filial duty more than a historical study. Ernst relates a number of anecdotes that add color to the documentary picture. One episode elucidates Urbanus' relationship with his early mentor Johann Eck. While living in Ingolstadt, Urbanus supplemented his income by supervising the studies of two young noblemen. According to Ernst, they showed little respect for their tutor and ran up huge debts. Urbanus, who was held responsible for them, was forced to put his own possessions up for sale and hire himself out as a mercenary. Eck rescued him in the nick of time by persuading the parents of the wayward youths to pay the debt and the captain of the mercenaries to release the new recruit. Confessional differences led to a breakup between Urbanus and Eck, Ernst explains, commenting on the circumstances of their parting: "A religious controversy had arisen between Eck and Luther . . . and Urbanus did not want to endanger his salvation because of the intransigence of his teacher Eck. He therefore left Ingolstadt . . . and made his way to Augsburg with a heavy heart." He describes a confrontation between his father and Eck, in which the former benefactor threatens to denounce him in Rome, as he in fact did. In Ernst's account, Urbanus remains firm and unruffled in the face of Eck's threats. He sarcastically welcomes Eck's "advertisement" of his powers in Rome. "For he would not disdain even an enemy's testimony to his teaching." An-

other anecdote related by Ernst shows Urbanus involved in a theological disputation with an Anabaptist woman arrested in Augsburg:

> The woman was taken in chains from the jail to the courthouse. A discussion ensued between them. The woman argued tenaciously, citing scraps of Scripture . . . but she poured them out without sense or understanding and twisted them forcefully to suit her nefarious purpose. Urbanus, however, took the quotations one by one and interpreted and explained them to make the woman clearly see her error. But although her arguments were refuted and she had no way out and should have fallen silent, she said: "By Hercules, you dispute elegantly, Brother Urbanus, sitting there beside the councilors in your soft cloak, while I am cast on the ground in chains, which in itself could take away my courage. And you speak as from the Delphian tripod." Urbanus replied: "It is not without reason [that you find yourself in this position], my sister, for you were once released from the captivity of the devil through Christ, and have now relapsed into your old servitude." . . . and he tried to make her turn to sounder thoughts with prayer and admonitions, but when the council saw that it was to no effect, they . . . expelled her.[42]

Ernst perhaps inserted the anecdotes to show Urbanus' ready wit or, in the second case, because of the novelty of a woman engaging in theological disputation. On the whole, Ernst portrays his father as a scholar who was at his books day and night and a committed Lutheran who stood up for his beliefs and was willing to suffer for them. He passes over Urbanus' efforts to keep up appearances in order to avoid losing his Catholic posts and instead emphasizes the harassment he suffered in Augsburg before the city accepted the reformed creed: "They were hostile to him and terrified him, tore his coat as he descended from the pulpit, stopped him in the street to demand a justification for his teaching, and criticized, vexed, and plagued him." Similarly, he described his position in Hall in dramatic terms as that of an "exile" who "wandered in the salt mines."[43] Since Ernst was five years old at the time of his father's death, he had to rely on the reminiscences of others and perhaps on family lore. His age and the eulogistic purpose of the piece limit the value of his biography in spite of the chronological proximity to Urbanus' lifetime.

A brief biography of Rhegius can be found also in Pirmin Gasser's *Annals of the City of Augsburg*, composed in the 1570s.[44] Like Ernst Regius, Gasser does not comment on the difficulties Urbanus encountered on the road to conversion, but depicts him as an early defender of Lutheran teaching. Contrary to his usual practice, Gasser offers no firm dates when reporting that Rhegius began preaching in the city. It was, he says, "when Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam and Johann Reuchlin of Pforzheim were flourishing in Germany, the foremost authors in the disciplines of the humanities and a purer theology." In this manner Gasser is able to link the first public appearance of Urbanus with humanism and the rise of a new theology. He goes on in the same chronologically vague terms: "He was an orator and poeta laureatus, and soon left the papal party and married in Augsburg. The city paid him a salary to teach the gospel at St. Ann's. Then, barely escaping the maws of the sacramentarians, he attached himself to Franz, duke of Lüneburg, and remained at his court. He died a pious death in Celle, loyal to the true doctrine." Under the entry for 1525, Gasser mentions Urbanus as one of the preachers who defied the Catholic authorities in Augsburg. "Although every effort was made to suppress the evangelical

religion (called 'Lutheranism' after the reformer) through imperial decrees and the threats of the papists, Urbanus Rhegius . . . began teaching the gospel in its pure form in Augsburg."[45]

Gasser had a better historical understanding than Ernst Regius of the relative importance of events. Whereas the latter's fancy was caught by the extraordinary encounter with an Anabaptist woman, Gasser's account of the debate between Urbanus and followers of Anabaptism shows him engaging in disputation with leading men. Gasser relates that a number of Anabaptists, among them Jacob Kirschner, Hans Denk, and Ludwig Hetzer, were imprisoned in Augsburg in 1527. Urbanus Rhegius argued against their teaching in court. "Although he proved to them their errors with most learned arguments . . . and laboured for a long time most conscientiously to lead the wretched men back to the true Christian religion and the paths of Sacred Scripture, it became clear that he could do nothing with these obdurate men."[46]

Rhegius' anonymous publications and the tenor of his sermons, which contrast with his outward conformity with Catholic practices, make it clear that he was a Nicodemite in the sense in which Calvin used the term. Although his compliance was minimal and he suffered harassment, he was not prepared to give up his position in the Catholic church before obtaining an alternative source of income. However, while Rhegius' case fits the Calvinist description of Nicodemite preachers determined to protect their livelihood at the cost of integrity, the link between learning and prevarication seems weak. Rhegius' case lends little support to the perception that a connection existed between humanism and Nicodemism. His correspondent, Wolfgang Capito, provides a better fit for the Calvinist model of the intellectual Nicodemite.

Wolfgang Capito

Wolfgang Capito (c. 1478–1541), born in Haguenau as the son of a smith, attended the famous Latin school in Pforzheim and graduated with a doctorate in theology from the University of Freiburg.[47] Although his studies followed the traditional scholastic curriculum, he was attracted to the humanities. In later years he expressed regret about having wasted his time on medieval writers: "How much time I gave to authors like Tartaretus, Orbellus, Brulifer, and Bricot! How much I wasted on Scotus!"[48] From 1516 on he was cathedral preacher in Basel. Later he taught at the university and became closely associated with the circle of humanists at the Froben press. In 1518 he published a Hebrew grammar. His introduction contains a typical humanistic exhortation to study languages. Latin, Greek, and Hebrew "offered a reliable basis for the whole circle of disciplines . . . ," he said. "These three languages contain the whole tradition of the Christian religion." He made the characteristic connection between the rebirth of learning and the revival of true religion that marks Christian humanism: "As people embrace good literature (*literas literatas*) and the tools provided by the study of scholarly languages, I am confident that the virtues of old will return and with them the pristine purity of the Christian faith."[49]

It was Capito who persuaded Froben to publish a collection of Luther's works in

1518. The preface and glosses he added to the edition indicate, however, that he regarded the reformer as a biblical humanist and a fellow soldier in the fight against scholastic obscurantists who neglected Scripture in favor of "logical nonsense."[50] Capito's lectures at the university likewise gave no hint that he supported the radical new elements in Luther's doctrine. He emphasized spirituality and deprecated the superstitious observance of rites, but retained the scholastic concepts of merit and *opus congruum*, work complementing faith.[51] At this stage, then, Capito was caught up in the widespread misunderstanding that Luther was a biblical humanist following in the footsteps of Reuchlin, Lefèvre, and Erasmus.

In 1520 Capito became cathedral preacher at Mainz, where he made a favorable impression on Archbishop Albert of Brandenburg. He was appointed to his council and, over the next three years, played an important role in shaping the religious policy of the young Archbishop. Two concerns occupied Capito during this time: the Luther affair now reaching a critical phase and his own negotiations for the provostship of St. Thomas in Strasbourg. Sympathetic to Luther's cause, he persuaded Albert to delay the publication of the Edict of Worms and to decline a papal appointment that would have made him inquisitor general and thus responsible for its enforcement.[52] Caspar Hedio recognized Capito's diplomatic success in a letter to Zwingli in October 1520: "Capito has been made a councillor of the Archbishop of Mainz. You can hardly imagine how much good he does in this position. Luther would already have been burned in this region and the Lutherans excommunicated had not Capito persuaded [the archbishop] to act differently."[53] However, Capito's desire to promote Luther's cause was at odds with the desire to advance his own career prospects, as he pointed out in a letter to Luther: "What have I not suffered to be of service to your troops? It did not earn me much favor with the Romans. . . . I have left behind scholarship, which is very sweet to me, and adopted a modus vivendi that is foreign to my character, in order to remove the obstacles in your path."[54] To remain on good terms with the Holy See and with Girolamo Aleandro, the papal legate in Germany, Capito was obliged to conceal his sympathies for the reformer and practice diplomacy (or as others saw it, duplicity).[55]

September 1521 brought a crisis for Capito. Albert opened a relic collection at Halle to generate new income from indulgences. This prompted Luther, then in hiding at the Wartburg, to write a scathing condemnation, *Wider den Abgott zu Halle*. To head off a confrontation between the two men that would have destroyed his diplomatic work, Capito went to Wittenberg in person and, in a meeting with Melanchthon, succeeded in preventing the publication of the invective.[56] It was clear, however, that Luther wanted nothing to do with Capito's style of diplomacy. He did not appreciate its results, which entailed compromises unacceptable to him. A personal meeting between Luther and Capito took place in Wittenberg in March 1522. The general impression was that their differences had been resolved.[57] It is customary to date Capito's conversion to this meeting, but he continued to conceal his leanings in public, speaking favorably of Luther in some letters and criticizing him in others, adapting his tone to the sympathies of the addressee.[58] He also continued to negotiate for the provostship of St. Thomas. A change of direction became apparent only in the spring of 1523 and was seemingly precipitated by external events rather than dictated by his own conscience.

While attending the Diet of Nürnberg in the retinue of the Archbishop, Capito first heard rumors that his position might be compromised by the unauthorized publication of his correspondence with Luther.[59] At the same time litigation over his title to the provostship, which had at last been confirmed,[61] was revived by Jacob Abel, a contender for the post. His hold over the Archbishop was slipping and the complex diplomatic ballet was in danger of falling into disarray. In March 1523 Capito therefore went to Strasbourg to look after his affairs in person. A letter to Michael Sander indicates the emotional upheaval he was experiencing at the time.[61] "I shall stay here for a month or so," he writes. "Then I'll return to . . . the treadmill, the turbulent life at our court. I'll push that rock along until I can conveniently leave off, for I have been thinking of the peace and quiet I enjoyed before." There are hints in other letters as well that he had been pondering leaving Mainz for some time and was merely waiting for a suitable opportunity to do so.[62] In the end, circumstances forced his hand. The rumors he had heard in Nürnberg proved correct. The Strasbourg printer Johann Schott published a volume containing, among other material, a letter from Luther revealing Capito's duplicity. The publication must have mortified Capito. He chose not to return to Mainz, and on 18 June resigned his position at Albert's court. The publication put him in a difficult position, but he still did not commit himself entirely to the evangelical movement. Rather, he tried to keep all avenues open. On 7 July he bought Strasbourg citizenship—a fact he did not mention in contemporary letters to Urbanus Rhegius, in which he identified himself as a Lutheran sympathizer, or to Erasmus, whom he asked to intercede for him with the pope. Since taking out citizenship would be construed as an act of defiance against Bishop William, his ecclesiastical superior, Capito addressed to him an apologia, *Entschuldigung: zeigt an ursach warumb er Burger worden* (An Apologia Which Indicates the Reasons Why He Became a Citizen, Strasbourg, September 1523), in which he put the best possible construction on this step. Since he enjoyed the privileges of a citizen, he said, he also felt obliged to share the financial burden.[63] We know, however, that he had at this time hopes that the city council, which was dominated by reform-minded men, would appoint him cathedral preacher. He reacted with great bitterness when the position went to his disciple and friend Caspar Hedio.[64]

Throughout the *Entschuldigung* Capito is careful not to tip his hand regarding his confessional preferences. He criticizes both Catholics and Lutherans. The Catholic clergy abused their power, he wrote, exercising tyranny over the people and living in worldliness and sloth; Lutherans in turn abused the gospel to cause dissent and riot. "They are not acting according to the Word if they rush in and overturn everything in their zeal and destroy the traditional order and, instead of improving things, exacerbate them and incite ill will, envy, hatred, even the desire to commit robbery and take away the belongings of those who innocently wish to keep the peace. It is the mark of a Christian to live in community with others, not to seek special ways and means." The evangelicals need not think that they alone held the answers to all doctrinal questions, "that they alone have cornered (*erschnapt*) the truth." Capito distinguished, however, between true and false papists, and true and false Lutherans. False Lutherans aimed at depriving Catholic prelates of their worldly goods and authority, wishing to transfer them to themselves; false Catholics

labeled anyone who challenged their power or threatened their pocketbook "an enemy of the church and a heretic."[65]

Introducing a dialogue between himself and the evangelical preacher Matthew Zell, Capito skillfully represented both sides in the confessional debate. The rhetorical device allows him to describe the corrupt Catholic clergy in terms familiar from Luther's invectives as "scheinheilige," "ablass handeler," "phruenen kraemer und werckheilige," that is, men pretending to holiness, indulgence peddlers, and simoniacs trading on their good works. These corrupt representatives of the Catholic church turned on the evangelicals, "screaming 'Murder!', shouting 'Bring on fire, bring on sulphur and tar, bring on powder! This man is blaspheming the church, denigrating the saints, entrapping souls!'—that is, he blasphemes our kitchens and unmasks our love of money, which is more important than God or Church, saints or souls." There were men in both parties who used religion as a pretense, concealing their real goals, namely, "wealth, honour, leisure, freedom, an easy life, and liberty to do or think anything at all without fear of God or the world."[66]

Capito remained a crypto-Lutheran until March of the following year, when he accepted a call to become preacher of New St. Peter, a position that gave him financial independence at last. He now publicly broke with the Catholic Church and, in August 1524, married Agnes Roettel, the daughter of a city councillor. In December he published a pamphlet entitled *Das die Pfafheit schuldig sey Burgerlichen Eyd zuthun* (The Obligation of the Clergy to Take the Oath of Citizenship). Reversing the position he had taken in the *Entschuldigung*, he now deprecated the clerical oath of allegiance to the bishop, declaring that "it was only for the benefit of the clergy and contrary to the dictates of brotherly love and the law of God. Consequently the clergy have sworn the oath, not for God's glory but for their own benefit. It is wrong therefore to swear this oath. Also, they are not bound by this oath . . . for no one is bound by what goes against God's glory and command."[67] In the following years, he became, with Bucer, one of the moving forces of the Reformation in Strasbourg.

Three features stand out in the image Capito wished to project. He portrayed himself as a man of peace and opposed to party strife; as an upholder of law and order; and (rather surprisingly in view of the evidence) a man of integrity. Accordingly he calls himself, in letters to Luther and Zwingli, "a man whose prime concern is peace and tranquillity" and in 1520–1521 expressed a desire to remain neutral. The reformers were too radical for his taste, he said. "Their approach did not seem to lead to tranquillity." He wished the Reformation to succeed, but preferred to be patient rather than use violent means. He conceded that drastic measures were necessary in order to set things in motion, but urged a return to peace and concord as soon as possible.[68] In the letter to Zwingli Capito stressed the law-and-order aspect of his own approach to a reformation of the church: "Order must certainly be maintained in a Christian society; traditions must be corrected, not subverted. The old custom can be unravelled rather than rescinded."[69]

He maintained the image of the peacemaker and upholder of law and order also in the *Entschuldigung* of 1523, emphasizing his desire for consensus and his respect for authority as the guarantors of peace. The internal strife caused by religious factions was counterproductive, he said. One may well ask: "Why should we ruin

each other and risk honour, possessions, indeed the lives of our wives and children and our own lives, when there is no reason why we should bear each other ill will, since we have the same complaints. . . . no one gains, if we ruin each other." Capito wanted Catholics and evangelicals to reach a compromise. The first step was to put an end to radical preaching that whipped up emotions. This was the aim of his own, moderate sermons.[70] By contrast, he criticizes those who sowed strife among the citizens: "The two sides could reach a settlement, if both searched for the truth and the spirit of God. Instead they prefer to argue about what keeps the kitchen warm and the wine cold." In his conclusion Capito again emphasized the message of peace: "If one were to interpret Scripture in a spirit of peace and without contention, all divisions among the people would come to an end."[71]

In the *Entschuldigung* Capito also depicted himself as a forthright man. He did "not hide from anyone"; his critics were wrong to suggest "that I am ashamed of the Word of God";[72] his quest was for the truth and "even if I wanted to keep silent [for the sake of peace], I can no longer hide my opinion."[73] Yet he gave specious explanations for the Lutheran elements in his sermons, ultimately relying on the argument, familiar from Erasmus, that he could not teach what he did not understand, but that he was prepared to toe the Catholic line once he had been instructed. Speaking against the superstitious veneration of saints, he had said: "Just as God does not want you to worship a dog, he does not want you to worship his worthy mother." Predictably, this comparison aroused indignation. Justifying his remarks to the bishop, Capito insisted that his message had been clear. In no way had he "compared Mary to a dog. Rather [he] had spoken about the prohibition against worshipping a dog and worshipping her." His purpose was to indicate the difference between venerating and worshipping. Scoundrels had misrepresented his position and called him a heretic. His words concerning the primacy of the pope had similarly been misinterpreted. He accepted the authority of the pope, he said, because "order is good" (*Ordnung ist gut*). Needless to say, a different justification was expected from an orthodox Catholic. In fact, Capito explained that the concept of the pope's primacy was the result of a historical development and could not be cogently demonstrated on the basis of Scripture. He did not object, however, to citing Scripture to support this historical development: "[A scriptural passage] should be employed for the sake of friendly counsel, not because it must necessarily have this sense, but so that the new development may gain respect and authority in all churches out of love and respect felt for Scripture. . . . I do not object to this kind of application and use of Scripture." He further commented on his use of the phrase "through faith we are saved," which his critics immediately seized upon as Lutheran. He insisted that his remark was orthodox since it did not exclude good works: "It should be understood to mean that through fasting, prayer, alms, vigils, masses, repentance, confession, and penance we are saved." However, his critics were asking him to cite a biblical passage in support of this interpretation. "I cannot point to such a passage. Therefore I lose the argument, even if I wanted to insist on it, and am told that my spirit is not of God."[74] In the concluding words of his *Entschuldigung* Capito therefore asked for such instruction and promised to subject himself to the verdict of his bishop: "It was my intent to bring these points to Your Grace's attention, with the added request to receive

this work graciously for I have written it in a spirit of subjection . . . and to continue regarding me as your obedient subject."[75]

As we know, Capito had ceased by this time to be an obedient subject of the Catholic church. Indeed, a pamphlet against Johann Fabri, suffragan bishop of Constance, which he had composed a few weeks earlier but prudently kept to himself, is totally at odds with the *Entschuldigung*.[76] Capito was no doubt a Nicodemite, but was it his humanistic training that led him to embrace Nicodemism? His attitude toward confessional questions resembles in many ways that of Erasmus. Capito frequently cited him as his mentor. He had followed his lead in applying philology to biblical studies, in expressing a desire to remain on the sidelines of the religious debate, and later in urging a reconciliation of the parties through accommodation. Erasmus in turn had considered Capito a kindred soul and, for some time, expected him to carry on his own work. "Take the torch, which I am handing on to you," he wrote to his young colleague in 1517.[77] Their relationship deteriorated in the following years, however. When Capito moved to Mainz, Erasmus voiced fears that his integrity would be compromised in the court of the Archbishop. "Capito is a complete courtier now, and very successful at it," he wrote in November 1520, "but I am a little afraid that the world will get a hook into him. Life is at its most corrupt there. But we can only hope for the best."[78] He published this letter in 1521, surely a sign that he was no longer at ease with Capito's course of action. Capito's duplicity eventually led to a break with Erasmus. This may not have been generally known, however, and was certainly camouflaged by Capito himself, who in 1534 translated Erasmus' *De amabili ecclesiae concordia* and lavished praise on him in the preface. No doubt therefore Capito was seen as an Erasmian humanist or at any rate a graduate of the Erasmian school of thought; and his later Nicodemism may have been perceived as an extension and a product of his earlier associations.

Humanists and the Defense of Nicodemism

During the 1530s time-serving turned from a motive that dared not speak its name into a formulated and openly argued position. Capito appears to have been the first systematic defender of Nicodemism in Germany. A letter arguing the case, which circulated in Germany around 1540, induced Calvin and other leading reformers to write what might be called position papers on the legitimacy of Nicodemism. Their views have poignancy because, whereas the confessional choices of men like Erasmus, Scheurl, Beatus Rhenanus, Crotus Rubeanus, and other humanists may have been influenced by a variety of factors specific to their careers, contemporaries may have seen humanism as the common denominator that fostered their equivocation, diplomacy, hypocrisy, or whatever other construction was put on their behavior.

Calvin had distinguished between true imitators of the biblical Nicodemus, who overcame their timidity to emerge as staunch defenders of Jesus, and "pseudo-Nicodemites," who abused the example of the biblical character to justify and indulge rather than battle their weakness.[79] The term was used in both senses in the literature of the sixteenth century, but with increasing frequency in the negative sense, especially of dissembling churchmen who refused to give up their benefices

and of unscrupulous courtiers and their princes who used religious concerns as bargaining tools. One of the first to invoke Nicodemus as a positive model was Otto Brunfels.[80] There are words of approval for Nicodemism in his *Pandects*, a miscellany of biblical commentaries he published in 1528 in Strasbourg, but the incidental nature of the remarks do not allow us to conclude that Brunfels initiated a defense of Nicodemism in principle.[81] Nor did Brunfels practice Nicodemism himself. An early supporter of the reformers, he attempted in 1521 to obtain a dispensation from his vows, or if that could not be arranged, permission to live outside his monastery. The imperial councillor Jakob Spiegel, who had furthered Bucer's dispensation and whose help Brunfels wanted to enlist as well, referred him to the regular channels, that is, to the papal legate Girolamo Aleandro. In Brunfels' opinion, however, Aleandro could not be trusted. "Don't you know about his attempts against Erasmus?" he wrote to Spiegel. "For as far as Luther is concerned, the matter is so obvious I need not mention it to you. What if he finds out that we [Brunfels and a friend, Michael Herr] are Lutherans? For we are evangelicals, nor shall we deny it. . . . I think you too are a Lutheran, but in secret, perhaps like Nicodemus and Joseph, for fear of the Jews." Brunfels himself vowed to die for his belief: "I am an evangelical, I am prepared to suffer any punishment for the truth, together with Luther." In fact, he was courting danger by writing this letter, he said, since it could easily be intercepted. The letter was not intercepted; it was sent to Aleandro by Spiegel himself, who feared for his reputation and therefore turned informer. In his covering letter to the papal legate, Spiegel declared: "I do not care in the least if Brunfels suffers what he deserves, as long as the pope does not hold me responsible; otherwise I shall perish with the conspirators." Brunfels, however, escaped and joined Bucer in Strasbourg.[82]

Whatever Brunfels thought of Nicodemism in others, he was not disposed to defend it formally. That role was reserved for Capito. Certain elements of the concept, which he tried to legitimate in 1540, are already present in his earlier writings. In 1520 he counseled Luther to connive with Catholics who were not ready to give the reformers their full support: "I am not saying, that you should leave off advancing the business of the gospel, but merely that one should be generous and indulge the crasser minds." This was the policy he himself practiced toward his patron Albert of Mainz. It involved "swallowing a great deal," as he confessed to Erasmus.[83] In later years, Capito held fast to the idea that observance of Catholic rites should not be condemned in those who lived under a repressive Catholic regime. From this Erasmus concluded in 1532 that Boniface Amerbach, who had remained Catholic and was at the time considering a post in Strasbourg, could count on toleration there. After all, "Capito says people should not be forced to adopt his sectarian creed (as I am told in a letter from the Bishop of Augsburg). This argument should be in your favour when you deal with the magistrate. It stands to reason that they will practise what the man is teaching of whom they think so highly."[84]

In 1540 a statement endorsing the Nicodemite position was circulating under Capito's name. In 1542 the East Frisian Joannes a Bekesteyn wrote to Felix Rex, librarian at Königsberg, expressing his disappointment with Capito's advocacy of Nicodemism. Uncertain whether the statement he had read was a forgery or actually represented the reformer's position, he had set out for Strasbourg to discuss the mat-

ter with Capito in person. He found that the document was genuine. Capito did indeed advocate the position outlined in the circular. Dismayed, Bekesteyn solicited opinions on the subject from Calvin, Bullinger, and Sebastian Franck. He described his interview with Capito in the letter to Felix Rex and enclosed copies of the statements he had obtained from the other three men. According to Bekesteyn, Capito taught "that the popish church is the true church of God," that no one "should rashly depart from it but remain instead in the parish to which he was called, patient and tolerant of the corruptions." Indeed, he asserted that "the mass was tolerable" because it contained traces of the Lord's Last Supper. Bekesteyn reported that he had talked at length about this subject with Capito and was greatly disappointed by the "lukewarm or rather inane reasons" he adduced in its defense. He was embarrassed to relate them, he said, but would provide a sample to his addressee, so that, "after learning of the frivolous arguments of this pseudo-scholar, your own faith might take deeper root." First of all, Capito insisted that the head of a household must regard it his *vocatio*, or duty, to look after his family, an obligation he could not fulfil "as a poor exile." Bekesteyn fundamentally disagreed with the suggestion that the head of the family "should connive with the degenerate [Catholic] church because he would be unable to look after his family from a distance." In Bekesteyn's opinion such connivance indicated a weakness of faith. Capito affirmed that the advice was meant for the weaker brethren, but his visitor was of the opinion that such indulgence should not be granted at all. Capito furthermore "forbade a separation from the popish church," citing the example of the apostles who continued to participate in Jewish ceremonies. Bekesteyn, however, pointed to the martyrdom of the apostles, which freed them of any suspicion of hypocrisy. "For (to cite Augustine) the church must tolerate many abuses, but she does not practise them, or pass them over in silence, or consent to them." He bluntly charged Capito with deceit (*simulando*) and reported that others in Strasbourg accused him of inconsistency and "the disease of flattery and the plague of avarice" but they were silenced and deprived of their license to preach.[85]

The views Capito expressed in the interview with Bekesteyn accorded with the *Consilium theologicum* (1540), which appeared under Bucer's name but was perhaps composed with input from Capito.[86] Like the document described by Bekesteyn, Bucer's *Consilium* maintains that the Catholic church is a legitimate church, speaks of the importance of a man's vocation, and mentions the example of the apostles, especially St. Paul's profession that "with the Jews I lived like a Jew, to win over the Jews"(I Cor. 9:20–21). The emphasis in the *Consilium* was, however, on the temporary nature of such actions, which were condoned only as long as the church was "still under the tyranny of the Pope."[87]

Nicodemism was also justified by the unidentified author of an apologia in defense of Capito, apparently written in reply to Luther's scathing condemnation of his tactics. The defense seems to have originated in Basel, where the manuscript was found, and more specifically in Erasmus' circle, for the writer praises Erasmus' accomplishments at length and is solicitous about his affairs.[88] It is difficult to say whether the views stated in the manuscript represent an isolated opinion or a position characteristic of Erasmian/humanistic circles. The author uses several arguments to palliate Capito's dissimulation. First, he says, Capito's position at the court

of Mainz made it difficult for him to take a principled stand: "It is very difficult for an honest man to be thrown together with men of such character and avoid giving offense to Christ." A courtier must treat his patron with consideration and could not take the hard line demanded by Luther. Second, Capito's advice to use moderation was a reaction, not to Luther, but to the radicals in Wittenberg, who had created chaos in Luther's absence. Third, his request was motivated by consideration for the weaker brethren and adopted in the interest of promoting the gospel. Fourth, he was misunderstood. His critics apparently found it hard to judge whether Capito was motivated by "caution, impiety, fear, or pious prudence." The last phrase was an echo of Capito's own description of his actions as piously prudent, *vafre et pie*, and Erasmus' recommendation to act in this manner.[89] The apologist contended that Capito had indeed used prudence, speaking "when it suited the time and the purpose, sometimes not without putting himself at risk." He deserved to be given a fair hearing. His action ought to be interpreted in a positive sense. After all, his approach presented an alternative to Luther's; and one must distinguish between "different" and "contrary" approaches. The anonymous author's defense is fortified with scriptural parallels. Would Capito's critics bear only with Elias and reject the seven thousand who had kept away from the worship of Baal? Did they think that Abdias should be severely reproved because, out of fear, he had hidden a hundred prophets in two caves? Did they think the Ethiopian Abdemelech should have been delivered up to the fury of the people, when he secretly extracted the dying Jeremiah from the cistern, using a pious stratagem? Capito had been acting much like these Old Testament figures: he had furthered the evangelical cause covertly, since he was in no position to do so openly. The writer thus supports Capito's efforts at legitimating Nicodemism and speaking of his prudence in the relative terms of *aptum*, the classical rhetorical ideal of considering time, place, and audience.[90]

Among the reformers we find a range of opinions on the subject of Nicodemism, with Calvin and Bucer at opposite ends of the scale. Calvin took a principled stand on the question.[91] He would not accept pleas of hardship or political expediency as justifications for the concealment of one's beliefs, and demanded personal sacrifice; Bucer, by contrast, was amenable to the idea of a temporary concealment under specific circumstances. He promoted the idea that the Catholic church was a legitimate, though corrupt, church in need of reformation. Until reform was accomplished, Bucer allowed concealment, if it facilitated the fulfillment of a higher duty, such as a father's toward his family or a pastor's toward a congregation under Catholic rule. He stressed, however, that any tolerance for concealment was time-limited and subject to reevaluation. It was merely meant to keep the weaker brethren from despair. In a postscript to his *Concilium*, Bucer expressed the hope that they would "in time become more perfect . . . for it is preferable to foster every effort however feeble to repelling many people by excessive severity and driving them into the camp of impious sects or to semi-epicurianism."[92] During the 1540s leading reformers tried to reach agreement on the question of the legitimacy of Nicodemism in a series of consultations. They were determined not to allow the subject to become a divisive one. Calvin in the letter solicited by Bekesteyn admitted that there was a difference of opinion among the reformers but asked Bekesteyn "not to take offense when you hear the word 'difference.'"[93]

In Wittenberg, the idea of temporizing had never been deemed acceptable. We have seen that Capito had candidly (and almost smugly) admitted that his approach represented a kind of holy cunning. He told Luther that he had "used human tactics for the increase of the ministry of faith" and hoped "to be of help by employing such ruses." Luther, however, could not accept Capito's policy of connivance and its justification: "This is your rationale, but according to our rationale, this is pretty flattery and the opposite of Christian truth. . . . I want nothing less than that the gospel be advanced by your rationale, indeed I severely denounce your method. . . . The Spirit of Truth does not flatter; it reproves."[94] Melanchthon's verdict on Capito, pronounced after their first meeting in October 1522, is characteristically mild but no less damning. Capito had urged moderation, convinced that Luther "would overcome by patient waiting those he could not overcome by rushing in," but Melanchthon saw no useful application for his advice. "Capito seems to be a good man and not at all experienced in affairs of the court," he commented. "He should rather be doing scholarly research in the quiet of his home . . . but he is very far removed from our kind of theology." At the time Melanchthon identified Capito's stand as Erasmian. When he returned to the question "Whether in times of persecution one may conceal one's views on the gospel" (1545), he again targeted Erasmus as the inspirational source of the policy of concealment. He did not expressly name the humanist, but referred to certain *thrasydeiloi* ("aggressive cowards") who make a bold beginning, forcefully demanding change, "but when danger approaches, lose courage and abandon their teaching; later, many such men practically turn into Epicureans."[95] The description fits the reformers' perception of Erasmus and recalls Luther's label for Erasmian skepticism.[96]

The connection between Capito, the notorious defender of Nicodemism, and Erasmus, whose name was synonymous with Northern humanism, may have contributed to the impression that a conceptual link existed between the policy of concealment and humanistic thought. Erasmus' insistence on the need for "husbanding" the truth, his use of St. Paul as an example of "holy cunning," and his promotion of the rule of *aptum* (which will concern us in more detail in the next chapter) may have given additional impulse to the notion that humanists were inclined to embrace Nicodemism. Though none of the Erasmian concepts can be associated with Nicodemism in a concrete manner, they provided a subtext suggesting a connection between humanistic training and a propensity to prevaricate.

The Idea of Accommodation

From Humanism to Politics

In the 1530s "concord" became a catchphrase used on both sides of the religious debate. There was agreement about the goal, but not about the terms on which it could be reached. In the first years after the Diet of Worms, concord implied a return of the sectarians to the Catholic fold. By the end of the 1520s, however, Lutheranism had become entrenched, and the parties were now looking for a temporary settlement, pending the decisions of a universal council. During the 1530s the notion that a religious peace might be brought about through mutual concessions gradually obtained currency and formed the basis of a series of religious colloquies.[1]

To what extent did humanism contribute to the idea of accommodation as a solution to the conflict? The manner in which the protagonists wished to examine and settle the issues under discussion reflected their respective cultural and intellectual bias. From an epistemological angle, insistence on the clarity of Scripture and the divine inspiration of the exegete conditioned the mind to take an uncompromising stand, while reliance on consensus as a criterion of truth and the admittance of human tradition as normative suggested the possibility of accommodation. Humanists, insofar as they were skeptics, favored the latter. From a methodological point of view, theologians (both Catholic and reformed) had been trained in the art of disputation, which was adversarial by nature; those with a training in the liberal arts, by contrast, tended to use literary language and rhetorical arguments that demanded *aptum*, the skill of accommodating the subject to time, place, and audience.[2] Humanists were more likely to have imbibed the classical rhetorical ideals and to practice them than their theological counterparts. On a more general level, praise of peace was a staple of humanistic rhetoric, and practicing civic virtue, the prerequisite of a peaceable and well-ordered society, formed an integral part of humanistic *Weltanschauung*. The call for peace was conjoined in humanistic writings with the observation that scholarship flourished and the search for the truth could be carried out best in an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. Humanism thus clearly provided a fertile soil for the idea of consensus through accommodation.

Humanistic Rhetoric and the Etiquette of the Religious Debate

So far this study has been concerned primarily with the effect of the Reformation on humanistic thought, but humanism was not merely shaped by the religious debate; its champions also attempted to impose their framework of ideas on the religious debate. The effect was modest, however. Petrus Mosellanus' oration *De ratione disputandi, praesertim in re theologica* (Concerning the Method of Debating, Especially on a Religious Subject, Augsburg, 1519), which was delivered at the outset of the Leipzig debate between Eck, Karlstadt, and Luther, may be considered a first formal attempt to press the religious debate into the humanistic mold. Mosellanus (d. 1524) had been appointed lecturer of Greek at the University of Leipzig in 1517 and, in 1520, graduated with the degrees of Master of Arts and Bachelor of Theology. His published work, like his academic degrees, demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of his research. He wrote textbooks on grammar and rhetoric and edited works of classical as well as patristic authors. He had hopes of being offered a post at Wittenberg, but the lectureship in Greek went to Melanchthon instead.

Mosellanus' speech *Concerning the Method of Debating* addresses two points: the protagonists' language and their attitude.[3] The speaker's language must be clear, simple, and correct, Mosellanus says: "Among Christians the best orator is he who avoids barbarisms and solecisms and who makes clarity the greatest merit of his speech. Everything else we leave to those who are equipped with some sort of verbal trickery and impudent enough to declare that they will make the worse argument appear the better and the better appear the worse."[4] Here Mosellanus expresses a humanist's concern for the purity of language and an equal distaste for scholastic sophistry.

Next he addresses the subject of the speaker's attitude. Here he elaborates on the rhetorical requirement of *ethos*, the orator's need to impress the audience with his courtesy and moral worth.[5] He notes with regret that the parties resembled hostile regiments. They had turned their pens into weapons. This was the wrong approach. A debate concerned with religious issues must not be allowed to deteriorate into warfare.[6] The protagonists must prove their point with arguments from Scripture or yield the victory to the adversary. Mutual recriminations benefited no one except the printers, who capitalized on the vulgar taste for scurrilous pamphlets. A religious disputation should be undertaken, not to satisfy personal ambition, but "from a desire for knowledge" and with the aim of bringing about "public concord." Addressing the protagonists, Mosellanus lectured them: "Do not turn this into an opportunity for displaying your wit, seizing any opening for slander, shouting at the top of your lungs if by the use of complex and tricky syllogisms you ensnare an ingenuous opponent. . . . Avoid the desire to win through obstinacy and do not act in a hateful manner." The debate was a joint search for the truth. The speaker therefore must not go into the debate "convinced of [his] own intellectual superiority but modestly hear out the other man's arguments and interpret them sincerely. If the opponent's view is well founded, Mosellanus says, one ought to adopt it and "consider it a gain to discover [one's] own ignorance and suffer embarrassment rather than being deprived of the truth." If the opponent's position is wrong, it must be refuted with plain reasons in a dispassionate manner. Charity and mutual respect should govern the

speaker's words. Otherwise the speaker could not be regarded as a philosopher in the original sense of the word, that is, a lover of wisdom, but rather as a *philoneikos*, a lover of strife. Such a man was no "champion of the truth, but a sower of discord."[7]

Theologians, moreover, must always remember *theologici decoris ratio*, the dignity of their calling and the conduct becoming to their profession. Mosellanus uses the analogy of a "Thracian banquet," that is, a drunken brawl, which prudent guests will shun. Similarly Christ, who is peace-loving, will shun disputations in which sophistic arguments are hurled like lethal weapons. Although the disputation is a search for the truth, it must be remembered that the human mind cannot fully comprehend the divine truth; it can merely glimpse the truth and meditate on it. This is a process that requires inner calm. One cannot meditate on the truth with a mind disturbed by passions. Given the shortcomings of the human mind, it is better to "venerate than to discern, to admire than to unravel the traces of divine wisdom." Articles of faith, such as the nature of the Trinity, and other fundamental theological tenets were not subject to public disputation at all. It must also be remembered that deeds were more effective than words; and contemplating the life of the apostles and the miracles they worked was more convincing than listening to doctrinal disputation.[8]

Here Mosellanus expresses a humanist's emphasis on ethics over logic, and more specifically an Erasmian emphasis on the implementation of the *philosophia Christi*. Indeed Mosellanus goes on to present Erasmus and Jacques Lefèvre as model polemicists. They displayed the correct attitude, he said, in their recent debate over the interpretation of a passage in Hebrews.[9] Neither man had been eager for combat. Erasmus' reluctance to enter the league against a respected colleague was overcome only by a desire to ward off the charge of impiety implied by Lefèvre's misinterpretation of his words. "Either he had to admit the accusation that he was impious, or he had to enter the public arena against a friend, a scholar of high repute." He chose to answer, but in a Christian spirit, exemplifying how a religious debate should be conducted. "He never said a word to harm Lefèvre's reputation and standing and was always mindful of brotherly love." Lefèvre in turn refrained from renewing the battle, thereby demonstrating his piety and love of peace. "Let the example of such men be an incentive to you," Mosellanus said. "Imitate these great men as you prepare for the debate. Concentrate, not on overwhelming the opponent with contentious clamour to make his ignorance notorious, to win a victory at all costs so that you may return to general applause and celebrate a triumph among your friends; instead calmly present arguments taken from the shrine of arcane Scripture. Let each one of you protect the reputation of the other. Either deliver the adversary from his error with the help of the truth or be docile when the truth is demonstrated to you". The disputants must remember that they were theologians, not gladiators. The apostles held fast to their beliefs and suffered martyrdom for them, but their example did not justify obstinacy in a debate. To the Christian mind, defeat in a religious debate meant liberation from error so that "defeat would almost be preferable to victory." This was the veritable meaning of "treating theology theologically, and holy matters in a holy way."[10]

Mosellanus' speech clearly offers a humanist's prescription, imposing classical rhetorical ideals on the confessional debate. In the printed version, Mosellanus'

speech is given additional context. It is followed by two letters from Erasmus to Mosellanus and Luther, respectively, that touch on the same subject.[11] In the first letter, Erasmus instructs Mosellanus on how to reply to a recent attack on his scholarship. He must "use argument rather than invective, especially as [his opponent] has refrained from mentioning names and writes with very little venom. . . . Make clear to posterity that we [i.e., the humanists] have not only the better cause but better manners as well."[12] In the letter to Luther, he similarly criticizes "slanderous disputations" as unbecoming to theologians. He himself practiced restraint, he says: "I could paint [my adversaries] in their true colours, as they deserve, did not Christ's teaching and Christ's example point in quite another direction . . . and I think one gets further by courtesy and moderation than by clamour. That was how Christ brought the world under his sway." Objections should be "met with argument, close-reasoned forcible argument, rather than bare assertions. . . . We must keep our minds above the corruption of anger and hatred, or of ambition.[13]

A passage in the *Ecclesiastes*, Erasmus' handbook on preaching, offers another striking example of the tendency to apply classical rhetorical rules to religious discourse. It likewise emphasized the importance of *aptum*:

> The man who dispenses the Word of the gospel [Erasmus noted] needs not only faith, but also prudence. . . . It is a characteristic of prudence to consider the time, place, and circumstances surrounding the person in order to decide what must be said when and in what form. In Paul we see the greatest simplicity [of faith] matched by prudence. He turns himself into all shapes and considers, not what is allowed, but what is expedient. . . . Now, if we consider the differences among people—differences in gender, age, social status, intellect, opinion, profession, custom—what prudence must the preacher possess to adapt his speech [to his hearers]. . . . The orators say that no one speaks well, unless he speaks aptly. . . . [This principle also applied to the preacher] for whom it is not enough to know what he should say, but also when, before whom, and in what form.[14]

Some of the ideas formulated by Mosellanus and Erasmus concerning the right approach to the religious debate can be found also in the work of Luis Vives.[15] The Spanish humanist (1492–1540) taught at Louvain and, after a stint at Oxford, took up residence in Bruges. Spending most of his life in Habsburg territory, he had first-hand experience of the Reformation controversy in Germany. His treatise *On Concord and Discord* (1526), addressed to Charles V, contains arguments remarkably similar to those of Erasmus. Vives paralleled Erasmus' thought in stressing the role of *aptum* in the religious debate; in arguing that it was more humane to seek consensus than to be inflexible or aggressively assertive; and in noting that the language of diplomacy was more useful than the unvarnished truth. Those who wished to settle the issues under debate, he said, must consider what is appropriate to the circumstances. They must "yield to the times, wait for the right occasion, pay attention to the flow of things." Manifesting love of peace was humane and truly Christian:"Nothing is more contrary to the Christian religion than discord"; "peace is the pellucent lamp of Christ"; "Christian picty consists of . . . love, charity, peace, and concord"; to live in concord was "humane and according to nature". . . . "The world was led to Christ through concord, patience, and mutual love."[16] Vives relied

strongly on arguments from advantage. Nothing could be more disadvantageous or noxious to the Christian religion than discord, he said. The use of force was ineffectual, moreover: "Do they not know how uncertain is power based on fear?" Like Erasmus, moreover, Vives cited the Bible and the Fathers as models of conduct: "How do we attempt to persuade [the opponent] to enter our league? With decisive arguments drawn from the arcane letters, or from the facts themselves, as Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Irenaeus, Athanasius, and Chrysostom did in former times. . . . [Modern theologians] however argue with one frigid phrase, to which they add violence, threats, terror, and savagery." Force could not bring about a change of heart; it merely made hypocrites of men: "They change their speech, but not their mind."[17]

Vives also shared with Erasmus and Mosellanus the view that some doctrinal matters were unfathomable. Mosellanus had observed that some mysteries were better venerated than scrutinized. Vives likewise believed that some of the issues under debate could not be decisively settled. Some matters "could not be known by either party, yet fierce assertions were made on both sides." Vives was one of those who believed that the parties were not far apart. He suggested that there was agreement on key issues: "Many issues are such that, if they are examined more closely, [one discovers] that what one party says is no different from what the other party says; they are merely fond of their own special terminology." Indeed, the battle concerned "not doctrine and the most gentle religion, but its interpretation; it is about power, fortune, and a way of life." Vives wished to remain above the parties, but the warring factions disapproved of neutrality and regarded those as enemies who "occupied the middle ground and belonged to neither party." Addressing himself to the Catholic party, Vives complained: "Any mention of peace or reconciliation makes a man suspect of being not quite free of bias and favouring the other [i.e., the reformers'] party, as if no one could possibly want concord, unless he was on the side of the enemy."[18]

While Mosellanus, Erasmus, and Vives described the right way of discussing religious questions, the humanist Crotus Rubeanus lampooned the wrong way in his *Solemn Tract Concerning the Art and Method of Questioning Heretics*. He sarcastically advised turning a deaf ear to all reasoning and avoiding quotations from the Bible, which the evangelicals had made their own by constant use and which had now become the "Book of the Heretics." It was, moreover, a good idea to show utter contempt for the opponent. "And don't forget to wrinkle your nose," was Crotus' tongue-in-cheek advice, "and to roar and arrange the features of your face so that you look like a carnival mask, to scare the heretic."[19] In a more serious vein, he deplored the uncivil manner in which the reformed party treated those who disagreed with their teaching. "You want the Church of Satan back, [they say], you close your eyes to the heavenly light, you do not possess the Spirit, in short, you are a Papist. Such words are a seedbed of strife." Both parties, Crotus said, should be seeking agreement and discussing religious questions dispassionately, "without hatred or bias, with all attempts aiming at the victory of piety."[20]

The efforts of humanists to subject the religious debate to rhetorical rules were resisted by theologians on both sides. They objected in particular to the relativism inherent in the notion of *aptum*, and they disparaged considerations of *ethos*, if speaking civilly meant indulging the opponent.[21] Accommodation was rejected out of hand by Luther, as we have seen from his correspondence with Capito and his

polemic with Erasmus, which led the humanist to the conclusion: *Aliter disputo quam tu*—"My style of argumentation differs from yours."[22] Melanchthon's approach likewise differed from the Erasmian style. Although he shared the humanists' emphasis on dignity and civility, there was no place in his argumentation for relativity. He therefore regarded dialectic as the most suitable method of argumentation. His aim was to convince rather than to persuade the opponent. Persuasion could merely affect assent to what was uncertain; dialectical reasoning, by contrast, led to "the discovery of the truth by means of confirmation and refutation, respectively, which gives peace of mind."[23] It was therefore important to retain dialectic as a method of religious debate, "but let it be learned, respectful, grave, and fond of the truth, not garrulous or quarrelsome or dazzling."[24]

The Erasmian style was also rejected by Hutten in the *Expostulation*. In 1523, the year of composition, Hutten's commitment to humanism had waned to the point where he sharply contrasted the cultural program of Erasmus and his humanistic followers with the religious program of the Lutheran party, in which he claimed membership. Using the pronouns "we" (Lutherans) and "they" (humanists) in an adversarial manner, he wrote: "They are good at writing both plentifully and eloquently, but we, rather than spending any care on literary elegance, will recommend ourselves by our lives and our deeds; we will earn people's respect through the steadfastness of our hearts in the pursuit of truth. Nor do we doubt that we will accomplish as much through a plain presentation of the truth as you [Erasmus] are able to do by means of a vain display of words." Manifesting the assertiveness Luther demanded of the Christian, Hutten spoke of the engagement with his opponents as "fighting to the very end and engaging in hand-to-hand combat." In Hutten's opinion, then, the religious debate involved direct confrontation and a heroic disposition.[25] He called Erasmus a "crafty sophist" for varying his speech with the circumstances, but Erasmus retorted that this was not sophistry but "versatility," a skill not unworthy of a Christian: "Neither Christ nor the apostles refrained from this manner of argumentation." Hutten had reproached him for speaking indirectly and figuratively instead of using plain language to express the plain truth. Erasmus retorted: "Perhaps Hutten would have wanted me to write something like this: 'You filthy cesspool, how dare you defile men of heroic stature with your muckracking books!' Such a style might become Hutten, but not Erasmus. If [the opponent] could be corrected, then civility was called for." Civility was a Christian virtue, and it was the humane way to act: "It is Christian to bear enmity toward no man; should enmity arise however, it is humane to comport oneself with civility and to have done with it at the first opportunity." Civility had pragmatic value, moreover. "Speaking indirectly was advantageous to the cause," Erasmus asserted.[26] Otto Brunfels, whose conversion to the reformed creed has already been mentioned, shared Hutten's views on the style appropriate to the religious debate. Civility and pacifism had no merit in his eyes: "Let there be strife; for it distinguishes the people of Christ from the traditions and fables of Antichrist." Accommodation was not possible, for "there is no common ground between light and darkness."[27] This was also the view of Erasmus Alber. He, too, admired Luther's assertiveness and contrasted it with Erasmus' plea for accommodation: "The gospel is by its very nature seditious. It spares no one, it embarrasses every-

one." He rejected Erasmus' diplomatic approach: "Jesus did not choose this way, but always bore the burden of unpopularity."[28]

This negative attitude toward the idea of accommodation is not confined to Lutherans. Similar suspicions of humanistic rhetoric and the flexibility it required are voiced by Catholic apologists. An exchange of letters between Johann Fabri, bishop of Vienna, and Cardinal Giacomo Sadoleto in 1538 is a case in point.[29] Significantly, Fabri's protests were aimed at the leading humanist in the Protestant ranks, Philip Melanchthon, to whom Sadoleto had addressed a friendly letter. In a remarkable parallel to Luther's and Hutten's accusations against Erasmus, Fabri depicted Melanchthon as a slippery fellow, a "Vertumnus and a Proteus,"[30] and linked his diplomatic skills to his humanistic training. Melanchthon, he said, had begun his "heretical" teaching as a young man without theological training. If only he "had been content with grammatical and rhetorical traditions." Instead he mixed up humanism with religion and "disturbed the holy church with his soft words." Fabri also disapproved of Sadoleto's "smooth, bland words" in his letter to Melanchthon. Such civility toward an opponent amounted to surrender. Sadoleto's conciliatory words, he said, were seen by readers as a sign that Melanchthon had won him over for the Lutheran cause. Returning to the subject of Melanchthon's training, Fabri conceded his skills as a humanist, but regretted his prominent role in the religious debate: "I grant you that Melanchthon has something to offer to young people in the field of grammar and rhetoric and has achieved quite a bit in the field of education, but he has had a greater effect [on the religious debate] and is more intent on destroying orthodox religion and suppressing the teaching authority of Saint Peter." For Fabri the only purpose of a religious debate was to lead the erring Protestants back to the Catholic church. Although he had much to say about peace and concord, he believed it would come about through instruction and legislation rather than negotiation.[31]

In his reply and justification, Sadoleto did not in fact advocate any substantive concessions to the Protestants; he did, however, defend rhetorical accommodation and, like the humanists Mosellanus, Erasmus, and Vives, emphasized courtesy and the power of persuasion. He, too, remarked on the importance of *ethos*, the dignity of the speaker: "I wrote in a benign and friendly manner. As a result, it may appear that I had no consideration for my dignity; but I believe that dignity consists primarily in directing all counsels and actions to the glory of God and the aim of achieving peace. . . . thus love of God on high and the desire for concord were my principal motives in writing as I did. I do not believe that my adversaries are now convinced that I have become a champion of their party. I am confident that this is neither their opinion nor anyone else's belief, for it is well known how devoted I am to the Catholic church." He explained that he had spoken in a conciliatory tone, "not to enter into friendship with Melanchthon, but to gain his good will (which my letter should certainly have achieved), so that I could enter the Lutherans' hearts and draw or lead them back to the party that is the best. In this matter I wish to be of service to the Catholic church as well as to them." Sadoleto repeatedly returns to this point. It was not his purpose to give up his beliefs, but to persuade his adversaries to give up theirs: "My aim was to attract them to my views, not to yield to theirs." He respected Melanchthon's rhetorical skills and appreciated the fact that he expressed his dis-

agreement in moderate terms but would treat him as an adversary until he bowed to the teaching authority of the church.[32]

It is clear from these reactions that the humanistic idea of accommodation and the rhetoric it engendered were suspect in the eyes of both Catholic and reformed theologians for their inherent relativism and the implication that some points of doctrine or aspects of religious practice were negotiable. The idea was kept alive, however, at the courts of princes, who were seeking a diplomatic solution to the controversy. The Regensburg Colloquy, organized by Count Palatine Philipp Ludwig and the Bavarian Duke Maximilian in 1601, affords a good example of the humanistic rhetoric of accommodation being promoted by secular princes in an effort to create the right conditions for a successul religious debate. In the preliminary discussion eleven rules were drawn up to govern the language of the debate. Among them we find the humanistic ideals enunciated by Mosellanus on the occasion of the Leipzig Disputation, of speaking "peacefully and in moderation"; avoiding sophistic quibbling; and staying away from "abuse, shouting, uproar, and untimely interruptions." The participants were admonished that their purpose was not to "display their wit" but to inquire into the truth. The discussions were to proceed in an atmosphere of civility and with a Christian purpose. Significantly, the last rule designated the princes as the guarantors of the language of peace: "Transgressors of the rules will be called to order, according to the judgment of the princes."[33]

The Religious Debate in the 1530s: Reactions to Erasmus' *De amabili ecclesiae concordia*

As Lutheranism became entrenched in the Empire, the possibility of religious peace on unilateral terms dictated by the Catholic party faded. In 1530 the Diet of Augsburg afforded the parties an opportunity to work for concord through accommodation. On the Lutheran side, Melanchthon undertook the task of preparing the ground for reconciliation. On the Catholic side, many were looking to Erasmus for a similar initiative. Charles Sucquet was exaggerating when he wrote that "the power to decide the matter" rested with Erasmus alone; it was true, however, that Erasmus was at the time the most influential Catholic source for the idea of accommodation, offering an alternative to the hard-nosed stand of apologists like Eck and Cochlaeus.[34] But Erasmus refrained from any official pronouncement on this occasion and declined an invitation to attend the Diet, pleading ill health.[35] In the wake of the refutation of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon continued his efforts to reach a negotiated settlement, corresponding with representatives at the imperial court, notably with Alfonso Valdés, an Erasmian acolyte or, as Melanchthon put it, "more Erasmian than Erasmus himself."[36] At the time, Melanchthon was searching for a mutually acceptable formula, as can be seen from the notorious letter to Cardinal Campeggi in July 1530, in which he claimed that the Augsburg Confession did not diverge "either from Scripture or from the Catholic church, or even from the Roman church itself . . . ; if the matter were to be submitted to the judgment of good and learned men, or at any rate, men who are endowed with common sense, less turbulence would ensue and we could easily come to an agree-

ment. . . . By yielding in a few points or passing them over, concord could be established."[37] Two years later, Melanchthon dedicated to Albert of Mainz a commentary on Romans, discreetly acknowledging Albert's good will and his efforts on behalf of a negotiated peace. It is significant that he sent a copy of the book also to Erasmus.[38] In Catholic circles, the idea of concord and accommodation continued to be seen as an Erasmian trademark in spite of the fact that he had not been present at the Diet of Augsburg and had been reluctant at the time to give public advice. This explains why Erasmus' almost incidental remarks on the subject in 1533 generated so much attention.

His comments, which form the conclusion of a commentary on Psalm 83 (subtitled *De amabili ecclesiae concordia* [On the Amiable Concord of the Church]), were phrased in rather general terms.[39] He made a plea for religious peace, appealing to Christian charity and asking the parties to overlook the faults of their opponents. Charity assured concord within a family. "How then will the whole church preserve concord, if each person is blind to the virtues of others and regards their vices with eyes like mirrors that produce an image that is either larger than the object reflected or a distortion?" Similarly, church abuses had been exaggerated in the heat of the dispute. So far both sides had proved intransigent. Catholics "will not allow any change; the others will not leave anything intact." A more accommodating spirit was necessary. There must be no quibbling about words, "as long as there is agreement in substance." In the spirit of earlier attempts to cast the debate in the mold of humanistic rhetoric, Erasmus called first of all for courtesy and the use of moderate language. "Some people," he said, "show no restraint, shouting 'heresy! heresy! Burn them, burn them!'" It was best to put a positive construction on the words of the opponent, to give him the benefit of the doubt, to "overlook things rather than stir them up," to "condone what cannot be changed and wait until a better oppportunity comes along." Erasmus' watchword was "accommodation." When he first raised the notion in the *Diatribe*, he used expressions like *temperare* and *moderatio* in a pregnant sense, meaning not merely a courteous yielding to the opponent, but an accommodation necessitated by the Skeptic's *aporia*, his inability to make a decision in the face of ambiguous evidence. In the *Diatribe* Erasmus had used the concept of accommodation in an epistemological context that required consensus as a decision-making tool; in the *Concord*, he infused the concept of accommodation with a political meaning as well. He termed the process *sygkatabasis*, literally "joint descent," a military metaphor describing a situation in which both parties give up the strategically advantageous high ground and descend to the plain, meeting on equal terms.[40]

Not everything was up for negotiation, however. Erasmus distinguished between *akineta*, "immoveable" articles of faith based on clear scriptural precepts; *adiaphora*, which allowed room for disputation; and human laws and customs that were subject to change and could be adapted to the circumstances. The last category contained many practices, he said, that could either be "tolerated or corrected." Some matters did not require an official pronouncement at all, but could simply be "left to the judgment of the individual." Erasmus failed to acknowledge, however, that the categories themselves were in dispute and chose to take a sanguine, indeed unrealistic view, of existing levels of tolerance.[41] In fact, both parties were domi-

nated by hawkish elements, and although Erasmus offered his counsel in the spirit of fairness and equity, his misgivings about change amounted to a bias in favor of the old church. He pleaded with both parties to change nothing "unless it is absolutely necessary or constitutes an obvious advantage" and to introduce such changes "gradually and only in circumstances, in which it can be done without great upheaval." The solutions he tendered were temporary, moreover. The immediate and practical aim of Erasmus' counsel was an interim settlement through mutual accommodation until a definitive verdict could be rendered by a general council. This was the spirit in which he offered his advice: "not as definite pronouncements but as means to removing all roots of dissension . . . until a synod is called."[42]

Three points stand out among Erasmus' suggestions: the need for accommodation; the deferral to the individual's conscience; and concern for public order, which was best safeguarded by minimal or, at any rate gradual, change. Appended to a psalm commentary, Erasmus' advice is a literary hybrid, a mixture of pastoral and political counsel. He made no effort to put his ideas on a philosophical or methodological footing, as he had done in the polemic with Luther, but used rhetorical arguments within a sociological context. The religious debate, he said, was a search for "that peacemaker, the truth";[43] he urged respect for "what has been confirmed by long usage and consensus," but did not here connect consensus and tradition with his epistemology. Instead, he used the watchwords "truth," "peace," and "consensus" as commonplaces. In rhetoric, however (as any orator trained in the classical tradition knew), commonplaces functioned like first principles in logic: both are assumed to be irrefutable. As homiletic/political advice, subject to the rules of humanistic rhetoric, the *Concord* was a well-crafted piece, the work of a skilled orator. It was designed, in the first instance, to provide a framework for discussion and ultimately intended as a consensus-building exercise. Erasmus clearly achieved the first goal, for the work received immediate and widespread attention. Within the next two years, *Concord* was reprinted no less than ten times,[44] was included in a collection of texts by Ortvin Gratius, and translated into German by Wolfgang Capito and Georg Witzel. It furthermore prompted replies from the Lutheran Antonius Corvinus and the Catholic Jacques Masson.

Erasmus' proposals did not find much favor with theologians. In 1533 Cochlaeus reported that Erasmus' *Concord* had given offense to Catholic churchmen. He mentioned in particular the reaction of church leaders in Scotland, where he had sent a copy: "The bishops and monks do not like his books, but reject them as suspect."[45] In some circles Erasmus was not considered a suitable spokesman for Catholicism. Two years earlier the prestigious Faculty of Theology at Paris had condemned passages in his works as blasphemous and heretical. His reputation was therefore tarnished in the eyes of conservative Catholic theologians. He had moreover presented his ideas as temporary solutions, pending a council. The need for a general council was, however, disputed among both Catholics and Protestants. Pier Paolo Vergerio, at the time papal legate at the Viennese court, combined reservations about Erasmus' orthodoxy with opposition to a council, which he saw as problematic. Erasmus, he wrote in a letter to the curia, was regarded by some as "Luther's companion." He wanted "a synod after his own fashion and the fashion of his Germans." He started on a fuller refutation of Erasmus' *Concord*, but abandoned the project, perhaps be-

cause he could not hope for a positive reception of his ideas at the court of Ferdinand, who was one of Erasmus' patrons.[46]

Erasmus' suggestions were also rejected by Jacques Masson. The Louvain theologian died before he could complete his reply to Erasmus' *Concord*, but the manuscript was published in 1555 by his nephew under the title *Adversus Erasmi librum de sarcienda ecclesiae concordia* (Against Erasmus' Book on the Mending of the Concord of the Church).[47] Masson objected to a number of points Erasmus had made. He did not approve of neutrality in religious matters, quarreled with Erasmus' categories of disputable and indisputable matters, and denied the need for a council. It was not possible to compromise on matters of doctrine, he said, "by taking something away from each side and making concessions in return"; rather one should give one's lifeblood to defend the tenets of the Church. To make concessions for the sake of concord was wrong; truth was on the side of the Catholics, and "the other party must accept the doctrine of the Catholic party in its entirety." The only point in which Masson was willing to make concessions was in the area of canonical law, which he said could be applied more leniently "for the sake of public peace." Not surprisingly, Masson disagreed with Erasmus on the issues that should be submitted to a synod and, in the meantime, would be left to the conscience of individuals. Erasmus spoke "as if these issues had no bearing on faith and as if the church had not yet made a binding decision concerning them." The question of free will, the nature of the mass, and the relative merit of faith and works were not matters of opinion, as Erasmus had suggested. These questions were in the realm of divine law and had been clearly defined by the Catholic church. Regulations governing auricular confession, prayers and masses for the dead, and feast days and fasting were similarly well defined. Any remaining details could be settled by the local bishop. "And so there will be no need to wait for the verdict of a future synod; . . . neither in these nor in similar matters can anything be abrogated in future or changed or called in question, because it has already been definitively settled."

The point that there was no need to wait for the decisions of a council was taken up by Protestants as well. A general synod was increasingly regarded as irrelevant. Kaspar Güttel, a Lutheran pastor in Eisleben, told his parishioners in a Sunday sermon that he would no longer tolerate *Harrende oder Expektanten*, people who hung back, waiting for a council. He had shown enough patience with the weak-spirited and with old people "soaked in papistical lies and hypocrisy." "Anyone who still wanted to cherish doubts and was unwilling to believe our high priest Christ, and instead preferred to wait and expect the pope and a general council, and thus die as an eternal *Expektant*, we no longer wish to acknowledge as a member of the Christian community." Similarly, Antonius Otto, preacher in Nordhausen, declared that proposing interim solutions and waiting for a council was merely a pose: "The *Expektanten* want to see how things turn out for this or that party, and who will keep the upper hand. That is the party they want to hang on to. There are some very quiet people among them, keeping to themselves . . . the country is full of such *Antinomer* who have never sincerely listened to the Word and learned its meaning."[48]

A more ambiguous response to Erasmus' proposals came from the Cologne professor Ortvin Gratius. He reprinted Erasmus' *Concord* in a collection entitled *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum* (A Collection of Desirable and Undesir-

able Things, Cologne, 1535). This was a miscellany of texts for and against the authority of councils. As the title indicates, the inclusion of a text did not signify endorsement by the editor.[49] Gratius explains the rationale behind the collection in the dedicatory letter to Johann Helmann, a colleague at Cologne. It appears that he published the texts as he had found them grouped together in a manuscript. All the texts, he noted, had been published, but were now rare. To these pieces he had added a few of his own choice. Erasmus' *Concord* was among the latter. Gratius acknowledged that the texts in his collection contradicted each other and might give offense to Catholics. He insisted, however, that there was no danger in studying them "as long as readers diligently and piously perused the short prefaces or rather epistles" he had added to each piece. Not satisfied with this explanation, he appended an apologetic epilogue, in which he defended the inclusion of texts by authors like Wycliffe, who had been condemned by the church, with the specious reason that "teaching heresies is very different from . . . publishing condemned texts for the edification of others." After all, Catholic apologists like Eck or Cochlaeus had to read Luther's poisonous writings, and no one blamed them for doing so. Withdrawing to safer ground, Gratius concluded that in the final instance the texts "must be justified by their authors."[50]

Gratius presumably added Erasmus' *Concord* for its topical interest. The note to the reader preceding the Erasmian text contains this recommendation: "It will not be inopportune to listen to the salutary words of that great orator and most learned theologian, Erasmus of Rotterdam. For such a great man would not want to say anything wrong or improper." Another reference to *Concord* in the apologetic postscript suggests that it was a kind of antidote to the schismatic texts preceding it in the collection. Gratius' own verdict is unclear, however, since his comments amount to little more than a string of carefully selected quotations from Erasmus' work. He cites Erasmus' desire to find "that peacemaker, the truth," and his appeal to preserve "what has been handed down by the authority of our forefathers and confirmed by the practice and consensus of the ages," as well as his caution against change "unless necessity compels us, or a great advantage induces us to do so."[51] Gratius clearly selected inoffensive phrases to recommend the work to the reader and stayed away from Erasmus' more controversial suggestions. However, his explanations did not save the collection from the fate of being placed on the Index of Prohibited Books.

On the Protestant side, Antonius Corvinus' reply is ambiguous only at first glance. It is cast in the form of a dialogue in which the characters argue for and against Erasmus' position, but which leaves no doubt in the reader's mind that Corvinus disapproved of the work. Corvinus (1501–1553), who was to play a significant role in the reformation of Lower Saxony, clearly separated Erasmus' contributions to humanistic learning from his contributions to religious questions. "Although his judgment in religious matters was not sound (as Luther's *Servum Arbitrium* shows), he cannot but be an excellent judge in his own subject area . . . in matters that do not concern religion but erudition," he wrote in 1526.[52] This judgment is also borne out by the dialogue discussing the *Concord*, entitled *How Far It Is Useful to Adopt the Reasoning in Erasmus' Recently Published "De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia"* (Wittenberg, 1534). The work is partly complimentary, partly critical of Erasmus. In the dialogue a character called Julianus represents Erasmus' view, advising that

"each party should give up some of its rights." Corvinus, who defends his views in the dialogue under his own name, emphasizes his respect for Erasmus as the humanist "who exiled barbarism from Germany," but faults him for lack of constancy in religious matters. He expresses surprise to find a reform-minded man like Erasmus turned into an enemy of the evangelicals. Julianus defends "his friend" Erasmus, noting that he had engaged in polemic with Luther unwillingly: He "was moved by the most urgent requests of his friends to calm the storms of this age." Corvinus disapproves of obliging friends in such serious matters, but Julianus insists that Erasmus had no alternative: "What can you do? He had to oblige the people who were so pressing and urgent, even if it is clear that one can hardly hope to do anything in these matters without giving offense to one party. He overcame this difficulty by attacking neither party and pointing out in the most friendly terms what appears to be the best way of promoting peace—after all, Jesus is the spirit of peace."[53] Corvinus supports only a qualified irenicism: "We share with Erasmus the desire for concord—as far as the authority of Scripture permits it." In this spirit, he was prepared to concede that neither party was without blame: "Wrongs have been committed on both sides . . . but, my dear friend, Erasmus should have remembered that we are discussing and are concerned with doctrine, not corrupt behaviour!"[54] There was no place for lenience in doctrinal matters. Julianus, as Erasmus' mouthpiece, refers doctrinal matters to a future council and, in the meantime, pledges "to keep away from all sects." Corvinus, however, rejects the verdict of a council controlled by Rome: "I regard myself a member of the Catholic, not the papal, church. Thus I shall listen only to Christ, the bridegroom of the church."[55]

Corvinus' verdict was endorsed by Luther, who added a preface to the book. He used the opportunity to voice objections to the idea of peace through accommodation and negotiation. It was a political strategy inappropriate to the religious debate, he said, calling Erasmus' counsel "futile and quite useless." He repeated his earlier advice to the humanist, asking him to keep to rhetoric and leave theology alone.

The next decade saw a number of religious colloquies, both among the leading reformers and between Catholics and Protestants, leading up to the Diet of Regensburg, 1541.[56] Religious peace remained an elusive goal, however. Corvinus, whose rejection of Erasmus' ideas had been phrased rather mildly in the dialogue, soon hardened his stand on the question of accommodation. Reporting on the Diet of Regensburg to Severus Kannegiesser, pastor of Lichtenau in Hesse, he said that "a reconciliation was impossible in [his] opinion, unless everything is judged by the verdict of Scripture . . . and our adversaries insist on many things that cannot be granted without violating the authority of Scripture." In 1547, he was among those who rejected the Interim and was indignant with Melanchthon's more moderate stand, his "Philippean accommodation," which he said suited men like Witzel and "other apostates" but was unworthy of Melanchthon.[57] In 1548 he wrote to Melanchthon directly, expostulating with him: "The devil could not have found a better way to extinguish the light of the gospel. . . . These accommodations, reconciliations, and condonations are being used to cover up a fatal evil." It was not right to make broad concessions out of a desire for peace. "You expect to find tranquillity and external peace in this fashion; take care that our problems are not increased twofold instead."[58]

A few years earlier, in 1544, Corvinus had brought out a second edition of his dialogue, reflecting his deepening reservations about the peace process.[59] In the prefatory letter to the revised edition, he expressed qualified support for the ongoing negotiations, praising those "who do not call for our blood." However, those who wanted peace Erasmian-style were accommodating for the wrong reasons: "They are motivated by concern for carnal things; it is for the sake of carnal things that they search for ways and means of restoring peace and concord to the church. Since they hunt only after what is useful and good for themselves, and not what promotes the glory of Christ and spreads the gospel message, they err and spin out senseless dreams. Among them Erasmus easily holds first place. . . . He could have devised a way of mending the peace, if he had not trusted in his own prudence and forever kept his eyes on bishops and cardinals in their full regalia." Corvinus explained that he had decided to reissue the dialogue at this time because once again people were cherishing the foolish hope that the schism could be reversed. In Corvinus' opinion this was impossible because the two parties were too far apart. "What hope was there of concord between Abel and Cain? How could the true Church be reconciled with the hypocritical church?"[60]

These sentiments are reiterated in the revised text itself. Corvinus added a long section at the end of the dialogue in which he again declared that concord was not possible since Catholics were not prepared to hear Christ, whereas the evangelicals were not prepared to put up with "papistical nonsense." When Julianus asks Corvinus whether he would reject the decrees of a council, he answers: "We do not reject the decree of a free and Christian council, where everyone has the right to give his opinion and quote Scripture. We cannot, however, accept under any circumstances those other conventicles and councils of the papists in which we are told merely 'this is our will, this is our command' and which substitute authoritarianism for argumentation. And we do not care whether such a council will come about or not." He concludes by denying that the Reformation was a schismatic movement in the proper sense of the word: "I am not a Lutheran. I am a Christian." Corvinus' revisions reflect the climate of the 1540s, in which hopes for unification were rapidly fading.[61]

Erasmus' *Concord* was twice translated into German. The first translator, Wolfgang Capito, dedicated his work to the Archbishop of Mainz, in whose service he had once been. It was a curious attempt to mend bridges and regain the goodwill of his former patron, the archbishop, and his former mentor, Erasmus. The fact that he chose to translate the work would suggest agreement with the proposals it contained, but Capito clearly used the publication as a vehicle for his own ideas, superimposing them on Erasmus' by way of a dedicatory epistle.[62] He explained that the purpose of his translation was to make the work accessible to the general reader and to those of Albert's councillors who were not comfortable with Latin. He described Erasmus as a fair judge whose advice deserved to be read without prejudice, but his own blueprint for peace differed in important points from Erasmus' outline. He agreed that the parties could be reunited through Christian love and that admission of their faults was a prerequisite for reconciliation. In doctrinal matters, however, Capito was unwilling to show the degree of accommodation Erasmus expected from the evangelicals. He insisted on the Lutheran position concerning free will and con-

cerning faith and works, that is, on salvation *sola gratia* and *sola fide*, by grace alone and by faith alone. Erasmus, by contrast, had declared free will a subject that was open to discussion and insisted "that works of charity are necessary for salvation." Capito added, moreover, that evangelicals could not accept prayers for the dead; Erasmus had advised to bear with those who believed in their efficacy. Both agreed that belief in the intercession of the saints was acceptable, if it did not involve superstition, and on the use of images, if it did not not involve idolatry. Erasmus, however, made further concessions: "We must tolerate the simplicity of some people, even if there is a certain amount of error involved." Both men agreed that the practice of confession should be retained. Erasmus warned of overly scrupulous confession, but believed that it was "salutary and useful" in the form endorsed by the church; Capito did not reject confession out of hand, but objected to its being made obligatory. The two men also disagreed on the nature of the mass. Erasmus wanted superstitions attached to the celebration of mass eliminated, but saw "no reason why the mass itself should be suppressed. . . . What is there in [the canon] that is not pious or does not arouse reverence?"[63] Capito declared that the uniqueness of Christ's sacrifice prevented him from accepting the canon of the Catholic mass. In spite of these differences of opinion he professed optimistically that the religious parties would reach an agreement eventually. He emphasized that the evangelical movement was not schismatic. The evangelicals, he said, had never left the church, for they respected Scripture and the sacraments, held the apostles and the Fathers in high regard, and were prepared even to respect the main tenets of the scholastics. On the whole, Capito attempted to level the differences between his own and Erasmus' positions, but he explicitly rejected Erasmus' complaint that the evangelicals were inconsistent, that they had repeatedly changed their doctrinal positions and were at loggerheads among themselves. Capito responded to this accusation: "No one can readily show where and when we, the so-called Zwinglians, have ever changed our position. The inconsistency of others does not concern us."[64] In the concluding paragraph of his preface Capito advertised the position of the Strasbourg reformers. He pointed out that Erasmus' ideas paralleled in many ways those of Bucer, whose tract *Furbereytung zum Concilio* had just appeared. It had been composed, as Capito emphasized, before Erasmus' *Concord* had become known in Strasbourg. The parallels demonstrated that the parties shared common ground.[65] Although Capito expressed the hope that his translation and his support for the cause of peace would please his old mentor,[66] Erasmus failed to respond to his overtures. In the reformed camp, reaction to Capito's publication was mixed. Blaurer reported that "many people in Augsburg revile our good Capito because he translated Erasmus' [psalm] commentary. They claim, now that he has become a printer, his only concern is to keep his press busy and make a profit."[67] Bucer lauded Capito's translation,[68] but his *Furbereytung*, which according to Capito offered parallels to Erasmus' suggestions, was critical of the idea of a council under the pope's auspices and more realistic in its assessment of the differences separating the two parties. Although Bucer declared in the prefatory letter that they "were still close enough that all who favor peace and a Christian life can easily come to an agreement on Christian doctrine," he made no concessions in the work itself, which is cast in the form of a dialogue between "Gothertz" the reformer and "Gotprächt" the Catholic. When

Gotprächt asks how the two parties can become one people in God under these circumstances, Gothertz answers with vague assurances: "All who call upon our Lord Jesus and in so doing do not deny their faith, shall be our dear and beloved brothers, with whom we shall have everything in common in the Lord, as far as lies in us." When Gotprächt points out that they do not share the Catholic mass, he replies: "Is it not enough to share the gospel, . . . to be friends and brothers with all who call on God and accept our Lord Jesus as the Saviour?"[69] Bucer's dialogue was approved in Protestant circles, but a concrete formula for reconciliation, on which Bucer had collaborated and which was presented at the Diet of Regensburg in 1541, was rejected by both parties. A similar formula prepared by Bucer seven years earlier for the French King Francis I moved Blaurer to exclaim: "O preposterous and immature desire for concord!"[70] And yet Bucer's proposals for reconciliation did not include substantive concessions but aimed at formulations that were broad enough to admit of several interpretations and thus be acceptable to both sides in the confessional debate.

Accommodation as a Political Virtue: The Church Ordinance of Jülich-Cleves

Among secular initiatives to secure religious peace, two in particular were associated with Erasmian humanism: the policies of Jülich-Cleves, spearheaded by Johann Vlatten and Konrad Heresbach; and the plans taking shape in the last months of Ferdinand's reign with input from Georg Witzel and Joris Cassander. A closer examination of the evidence suggests, however, that these essentially political initiatives were only distantly related to Erasmian humanism. They were, in fact, twice removed from their original context. Erasmus himself had tranferred to the religious sphere ideas that were philosophical or rhetorical in their original conception; these were now transplanted from the religious to the political milieu.

Most of the united territories of Jülich, Cleves, and Mark lay within the jurisdiction of the archbishop of Cologne. During the fifteenth century, however, the dukes of Cleves had negotiated a certain measure of independence.[71] Duke Johann III (d. 1539) shared with other German princes a desire for religious peace through accommodation. His policies have been analyzed in a number of recent studies. Albrecht Luttenberger provides the latest detailed examination of efforts in Reformation Germany to preserve religious peace and unity. He characterizes the initiatives of the middle party represented by Duke Johann as motivated by "an interest in peace and order that was politically or ethically motivated rather than based on a clear [doctrinal] formula."[72] The resulting official statements prolonged the illusion that the two religious parties were not far apart and that the schism was reversible.

In the wake of the Peasants' War, the Duke, who was dogmatically conservative but intent on correcting the abuses that had incited the riots, passed a decree prohibiting any innovations and threatening legal action against "Winkelprediger," that is, unauthorized evangelical preachers; at the same time he tried to enforce residency and admonished the clergy to provide spiritual leadership.[73] In 1532 the Duke published a church ordinance that was similarly aimed at the correction of abuses

while putting a stop to doctrinal innovation. Two of the Duke's close advisors, Johann von Vlatten and Konrad of Heresbach, tutor of the Duke's son, had long-standing ties with Erasmus.[74] They were instrumental in shaping Duke Johann's church policy and assured its continuation under his son Wilhelm. The ordinance, which had been drafted in the spring of 1532, was submitted to Erasmus for his advice and approval. For this purpose Heresbach and Johann's chancellor, Karl Harst, visited Erasmus in Freiburg in September 1532. He was a reluctant advisor, however, or at any rate, reluctant to lend his name officially to the enterprise. It was difficult to give good advice in these times of trouble, he said, "and not quite safe for me. For, if anything new were introduced on my initiative, overly scrupulous theologians . . . would immediately clamor that Erasmus had fathered a new sect called 'moderates.'" He added diplomatically: "If my counsel is successful, it should be imputed to the skill of the best of princes rather than to my prudence."[75]

The church ordinance and the accompanying interpretation (*Declaratio*, dated 1533) aimed at inclusiveness. It admonished preachers to keep the peace and work for the unity of the church, directing them to Scripture as the mainstay of Christian life. References to some controversial subjects, such as the relationship between faith and works, were carefully avoided. The question whether the Eucharist could be received in both kinds was similarly left untouched. The Real Presence, however, which was central to Catholic doctrine, was emphatically maintained. The need for auricular confession was reaffirmed, but was treated with considerable latitude. The order thus remained essentially Catholic but was conciliatory in spirit and vague enough in its formulation to allow in most points an interpretation acceptable to adherents of both religious parties. Duke Johann was no Erasmian philosopher king, however. His ordinance represents a successful grafting of political shoots on to humanistic roots but provides no rationale or logical framework for the laws it contains.

The ordinance was not well received in Wittenberg. Luther, who obviously regarded it as Erasmus' handiwork, commented that it was "bad German, bad evangelical doctrine," and, as everything that came from Erasmus, theologically worthless.[76] Melanchthon, whose own position was hardening, rendered his verdict on the ordinance in 1538, dubbing the champions of a negotiated peace the "Mittelhauf," the motley crew in the middle.[77] He disapproved of what he saw as a sacrifice of religious to political concerns. "Kings and princes complain that the public peace is disturbed by dissidents," he wrote, "and want the religious factions to make compromises (*attemperari*) for their own benefit and for the sake of peace, rather than for the sake of truth and the glory of God." It is ironic that Melanchthon, who had justified his irenic words in 1530 as appropriate in rhetorical terms, now blamed humanistically trained courtiers for creating a secular context, and was indignant that the negotiations had passed into the hands of "intellectuals who have too much confidence in themselves" and were merely "laymen trained in letters and rhetoric."[78] One might say of Melanchthon's comments that it takes a humanist to recognize a humanist. In a remarkably stern and uncompromising statement, sent to a receptive audience of hard-liners in Nürnberg in 1540, Melanchthon used what became catchphrases in the condemnation of accommodation. He characterized the champions of the idea of accommodation as hypocrites, imitators of Proteus and Epicurus, who used deceit and rhetorical artifice, providing convenient interpreta-

tions for inconvenient doctrines and practices, and devising "ambiguous, flexibly worded" articles. "Flexible," in particular, was a favorite word of reproach in the fight against promoters of accommodation. Both Melanchthon and Luther had earlier on used the term to criticize Erasmus' approach. After his death, such undesirable flexibility came to be associated with Witzel, who was regarded as Erasmus' heir in that respect.[79]

Humanistic Concepts of History: Georg Witzel's Proposals for a Religious Peace

Georg Witzel (1501–1573), a native of Vacha (near Fulda), was an ardent Lutheran in the 1520s.[80] He was appointed to the parish of Niemegk, north of Wittenberg, but after being harassed for "heretical" views, resigned his position in 1531 and proclaimed his return to the Catholic church. His professed change of heart was met with suspicion by Catholics and hostility by Lutherans. In the circumstances, Witzel found it difficult to obtain alternative employment. Justus Jonas successfully agitated against him when he sought an appointment at the University of Erfurt. He was exiled from Hesse, but rescued by Hoyer, count of Mansfeld, who appointed him preacher in Eisleben. Since local sentiment there was decidedly in favor of Luther, Witzel suffered isolation. He next found patrons in George of Saxony and Joachim II of Brandenburg, but in each case the death of his sponsor led to a change in confessional politics and forced him to move on. After Joachim's death, Witzel's interests were promoted by Johann von Henneberg, abbot of Fulda. From 1547 on, he also served as imperial councillor to Ferdinand I.

A poison-pen letter from Johann Eck to Cardinal Contarini in 1540 sized up Witzel as unreliable and incompetent, a humanist lacking theological training. His conversion to Catholicism was not rooted in spiritual concerns, Eck claimed, but in a desire to revenge himself for the ill treatment he had received at the hands of the Lutherans. His writings against Luther deceived no one except people who had no understanding of theology (*in theologia asophi*). They wrongly assumed that Witzel was a Catholic apologist "like Faber, Cochlaeus and Eck, and more inclined than they to bring about concord." It is notable that Eck had the same problem with Witzel's mediating efforts as Luther had with the "Erasmian" ordinance of Jülich-Cleves: It was bad theology and appealed only to those who knew nothing about the subject. Eck did not approve of Witzel's concept of accommodation: "He thinks we ought to deal with holy faith as we do in a quarrel between neighbours about a field, where arbiters and friendly peacemakers intercede, who take something away from one person and add something elsewhere to put an end to the controversy."[81] Significantly, Eck connected Witzel's teaching with humanism and saw him as a disciple of Erasmus. Witzel was no theologian, he said, but a grammarian. "Coming out of [the grammarian] Priscian's school, he broke into Pauline theology with the help of Luther's books. . . . he is a powerful writer, whether you want him to write in our language [German] or in Latin; and he has a taste even of Greek and Hebrew." Eck thus portrays Witzel as a man primarily trained in the humanistic disciplines of grammar, rhetoric, and languages. He returns to this point elsewhere, calling Witzel

a "small-town schoolmaster . . . who learned his loquacity from Priscian, Valla, and the adages of Erasmus, and daring enough to pass judgment about the Christian world."[82] Again, he casts Witzel in the role of a disciple of humanists, who lacked the theological training necessary to pronounce on matters of religion.

In Protestant circles, Witzel was likewise seen as a humanist and an Erasmian. Antonius Corvinus wrote a satirical dialogue, *On Georg Witzel's Desertion to the Papists*, in which Witzel explains the use of the rhetorical method: "The rhetoricians teach us how we can cleverly dissimulate anything that will prejudice our cause if it is not a very good one, and vice versa, to pick out anything that will benefit us and to exaggerate it in our speech. I'll have to stick to these little rules, tooth and claw, for I have undertaken to defend justification by works, not faith."[83] Luther called Witzel a despicable *grammatellum seu vocabularium*, "a little grammarian and teacher of words." He had read none of Witzel's writings, he said, but he knew the man intimately, and in his judgment he was "a jealous and malevolent hypocrite."[84] Luther's comments were made in reply to a letter from Nicolaus Amsdorf charging Witzel with intellectual theft. "He has stolen all his ideas from Erasmus," Amsdorf wrote. ". . . The sum of his doctrine is this: The teachings of Luther are heresy because they have been condemned by the Emperor and the Pope; his own teachings are orthodox because cardinals, princes, and kings send and give him golden cups, etc. May I die, if there is anything else in his books!" Witzel indignantly refuted Amsdorf's accusation: "How can you say that I have collected my ideas out of Erasmus? Show me one page in Erasmus that teaches what I teach. Show me one line, which I have taken from his writings and patched onto mine. . . . I do not deny that I have read Erasmus, as I have read Jerome and Cyprian as well, but let others judge whether I have imitated him."[85]

Witzel was no slavish imitator of Erasmus, but he greatly admired him, placing him "next to the apostles and heroic theologians of old." He first approached Erasmus with a fawning letter dated September 1532, exhorting him to "fight back with both arms, resist schismatics and sophists with both legs; fight for orthodoxy, stand up for the old theology." After these militant words, however, he went on to urge Erasmus to "take hold of the middle ground where both parties can meet" and pleaded with him "to generate as much enthusiasm as possible for a general council, in words and in writing."[86] In a follow-up letter, written in the same breathless style as the first, Witzel repeated that his "main point was the call for a general council. He boldly and bluntly urged Erasmus not to allow poor health to interfere with his duty to speak out: "Do not stay away from this most beneficial initiative. If I were the Emperor I would not listen to 'I am ill with the stone.' . . . It is not Luther's voice we need to hear, nor the voices of the sophists, but the voice of Erasmus and men like him, that is, men who aid neither party but sincerely engage themselves on behalf of Christianity."[87]

The relationship between Erasmus and Witzel has most recently been examined by Barbara Henze. She has established a general correspondence of thought in three points: both men differentiated between immovable divine law and *adiaphora*, which were open to accommodation; both based the doctrinal truth on Scripture and consensus, which favors a historical rather than a systematic approach; and both believed in a spiritual church sustained by and united in love.[88] It should be added,

however, that there are also significant divergences in the two men's views. First of all, Erasmus' own opinion on the matter deserves consideration, and he did not recognize in Witzel a kindred spirit. Second, granted that Witzel's concept of accommodation changed over time and came to resemble the Erasmian idea, it lacked the epistemological underpinning that would give it a truly Erasmian stamp. Third, Witzel put the idea of accommodation on a historical footing that was significantly more concrete, as we shall see, than Erasmus' general references to "long-standing traditions."

Witzel's letters to Erasmus in 1532 failed to create the hoped-for rapport. Erasmus did not reply, claiming later that he had not been sure of Witzel's whereabouts.[89] This was a polite fiction, however, since Witzel had specifically asked Erasmus to direct his answer to Fulda. It is more likely therefore that Erasmus' silence indicated disapproval. This is also suggested by discreet, but nevertheless critical remarks about Witzel in a letter to Georg Agricola, then town physician at Chemnitz: "I knew that Witzel thought ill of Luther," Erasmus wrote. "I would have advised him not to indulge his ill feelings." He found Witzel too impetuous and suspected that he was motivated by a desire for revenge rather than love of peace. Perhaps he was also annoyed by Witzel's sharp remark implying that he had used ill health as an excuse for inaction. In the letter to Agricola, Erasmus protested that he was an old man who had done his part: "I believe I have given sufficient proof of my zeal for the church. Let others do what they can."[90] There are strong indications also in the *Concord*, published the following year, that Erasmus did not approve of Witzel's militant rhetoric and was suspicious of the general thrust of his ideas. Although he did not mention him by name, literal and structural parallels with his letters suggest that some of Erasmus' comments were meant to address Witzel's proposals. Witzel had noted the intransigence of the parties in the words: "The heretics want nothing to remain intact in the church; the men at the Sorbonne want nothing removed." Erasmus closely paralleled this phrase: The papal party "will not allow anything to change; the others will not allow anything to remain intact." Witzel had noted that one "cannot find the right path, for ambition and the desire to be in control are everywhere." Erasmus echoes his words: "Where ambition is in control . . . one cannot achieve concord." He did not agree, however, with Witzel's suggestion that the emperor's handling of the situation deserved to be faulted. Witzel had suggested that the princes "were asleep" so that the religious question was kept in abeyance. Erasmus—seemingly replying to this charge—commented that "perhaps we are under the impression that the Emperor is asleep, but he is on his guard." Witzel had been deliberately provocative to the point of suggesting coercion and military action. He preferred "being bold to being timid," but in Erasmus' opinion nothing could be more dangerous than "unthinking boldness."[91] The parallels suggest that Erasmus took the opportunity of writing on the subject to discreetly engage his would-be disciple in a dialogue, in effect correcting Witzel's notion that they were in complete agreement. Witzel himself acknowledged in later years that he had been too militant at the time. He eventually softened his stand and, in an apologetic statement, described his former aggressiveness as a pose: "It was necessary in those militant times to make my adversaries realize that I too was strong and could do harm . . . but now that a truce has been concluded, if according to custom the *pater patratus et fe-*

cialis [who in antiquity concluded peace treaties] came forward, I would wish to return to a true Catholic friendship. . . . let us be Lotus-eaters and forget the past, as it is said in the *Odyssey*."[92]

Witzel had composed a number of treatises on the subject of concord in the 1530s and 1540s: *Adhortatiuncula ut vocetur Concilium* (composed in 1532, first published 1534), *Methodus Concordiae* (composed and published 1533), and *Via Regia* (composed 1564, published posthumously).[93] Interestingly, in view of Witzel's professed admiration for Erasmus, there is no mention of the humanist's name in these writings. Witzel did, however, translate large tracts of Erasmus' *Concord* into German under the title *Von der einigkeyt der kyrchen. Durch Erasmus von Roterodam ytzt new ausgangen* (Erfurt, 1534). As in the case of Capito, this did not mean that he was in complete agreement with Erasmus' views. Witzel used the biblical metaphor of the *via regia*, the "Royal Road" (Num. 21:22) to describe the course of reunification. He defined the Royal Road as "diverging neither to the right nor to the left";[94] Erasmus used the metaphor of *sygkatabasis*, descending from a high point to meet on common ground. The metaphors indicate different processes of reaching agreement. According to Witzel, the process of reconciliation involved returning to, and avoiding any future deviation from, a clearly defined and historically authenticated doctrinal truth signified by the "Royal Road." The point of Erasmus' metaphor, by contrast, was the lack of doctrinal clarity, which made consensus the criterion of truth. The process of reconciliation involved a repositioning in order to find common ground and arrive at the requisite consensus. Witzel's translation of the pertinent passage in Erasmus' *Concord* suggests that he failed to understand these implications. He translated the reference to *sygkatabasis*, "Es mues ein semptliche verzichtung do seyn" (there must be complete yielding); and interpreted *akineta*, the articles of faith that Erasmus regarded as untouchable, as "die alte rechte lere" (the old correct doctrine).[95] Thus Witzel imposed on the Erasmian *sygkatabasis* his own ideas of reunification, which involved chronological considerations and contained the notion of bringing the evangelicals back to the fold rather than making concessions to them.[96]

The importance of chronological considerations is evident from the criteria Witzel used to establish the doctrinal truth: "first of all, [evidence] from holy Scripture, then from the oldest Fathers of the Church, and finally from plausible rather than sophistic or heretical arguments." By "sophistic or heretical" arguments he meant scholastic and Protestant teachings, respectively. Erasmus and Witzel appear to show the same bias, favoring Scripture and the Fathers over modern exegetes. Their rationale differs, however, as we shall see. Witzel's bias rested on chronological considerations. He believed in the efficacy of the historical argument and made chronological proximity to Christ's lifetime a principal criterion in determining the authority of a source. In a report he prepared for Ferdinand I in 1556, he commented on his historical method: "[F]or the past twenty-four years it has been the goal of my industrious efforts and continual attention to search for the origin and foundation of the Catholic Church in the canonical Scriptures and in the old theological books and councils, . . . and I call 'Catholic' everything that has been practiced everywhere in the Christian community [from that time] until now." For Witzel the *via regia* was the way of the early church, "wie es vor alters war."[97] "This old and good road was

taken a thousand years ago by the dear Fathers of the Christian Church, in accordance with God's command. Thereafter some people left this road and went astray."[98] The practices and beliefs of the early church were normative for Witzel and had for him the authority that Erasmus vested in consensus and the magisterium of the institutional church. The difference in their assumptions is best seen from Witzel's proposals at the Leipzig Colloquy (1539).

In January of 1539 a group of councillors from Hesse, Albertine Saxony, and Brandenburg met in Leipzig with Bucer and Melanchthon to discuss ways and means of arriving at a religious settlement.[99] Witzel was present as well. They were aiming at a concrete decision, a *Richtscheit* (verdict). From the daily reports of Gregor Brück to his prince, the Elector Johann Friedrich, it is clear that the Saxon councillor Georg of Carlewitz was the driving force behind the talks. He in turn had apparently been instructed by Witzel. Carlewitz suggested that a settlement could be reached on the basis of the teaching and practices of the early church, by which he meant the teaching of the first "eight or nine hundred years."[100] Carlewitz' proposal rested on the assumption that they would find in the early church that uniformity (or near-uniformity) which would enable them to distinguish authentic Christian teaching from later accretions and deviations. They could then inform the Emperor that they "had reached agreement on true apostolic teaching," which would make it possible to call a "Council of the German Nation" and reunify the church. To Carlewitz' consternation the assumption that the early church was uniform turned out to be an illusion. He explained apologetically that he had acted in good faith and made the proposal "as a layman, who did not understand much about the principles of the matter. . . . he had not known that the corruptions were of such long standing and that the Fathers contradicted each other so much." He nevertheless clung to the idea of a settlement, pointing to Witzel's "next work, in which he describes the apostolic church in terms that make it unavoidable to pass judgment."[101] He meant Witzel's *Typus Ecclesiae Prioris* ("A Typology of the Early Church"), which appeared the following year. As an effort to develop an objective historical method to settle the doctrinal dispute, the book was a failure. Rather than giving a full account of patristic interpretations, which would have been a monumental task, Witzel followed the usual practice of controversialists, citing passages supporting the position he favored and overlooking those that supported a different point of view.[102] In his preface he acknowledged, moreover, that the historical argument was not cogent. It resembled a "schematic drawing" and need not be observed in every point, he said.[103]

One may conclude that the resemblance between Witzel's and Erasmus' teaching on concord is superficial.[104] His idea of a *via regia* has nothing in common with the Erasmian *sygkatabasis*. It does not contain the notion of mutual concessions in the face of doctrinal uncertainty, but postulates the existence of an objective historical method to establish the doctrinal truth, which he proposed to find in the teaching of the early church. For Witzel, the ways of the early church were the *via regia*; all beliefs and practices diverging from this norm were deviations from the right path. Erasmus' idea of accommodation, by contrast, was predicated on the limitations of the human mind, its great difficulty to recognize the truth in points nonessential to salvation; for him, the need to achieve consensus was an epistemological

necessity. While Witzel proposed research to establish an external and objective historical truth on which to base a settlement, Erasmus' suggestions involved an internal, subjective element: the will to be persuaded, to make concessions, and in the final instance, to obey the magisterial voice of the Catholic church. Erasmus does not clearly indicate in whom the teaching authority is vested, but in the *Concord* he delegates this authority to a general council. Witzel's views on the role of a council resemble, but do not match Erasmus' ideas. In his *Dialogus von dem Concilio* (Nürnberg, 1535) Witzel delegates to a council the responsibility of deciding whether or not a doctrine represents the teaching of the early church. A council was needed, he said, to "investigate whether or not the newborn gospel was that old one which the martyrs of the church had." Its task was to authenticate an interpretation by checking it against an existing norm rather than providing an interpretation itself. Thus Witzel did not invest the council with teaching authority proper. On the contrary, he emphatically denied their authority to interpret obscure passages in the Bible, confining their role to the safeguarding of tradition: "Who would suffer a council to be called *about* [my italics] the gospel. . . . that was not the purpose of any council of old; rather it was its mission to see that the gospel fared well in Christendom and whether it was respected as it had been from the beginning of the community of the church."[105] Witzel seemingly expected the delegates to possess a historical understanding, which would allow them to distinguish the teaching of the original church from later aggregations.

The issue of historical continuity was an important one in the Reformation debate. The diverse approaches to history taken by the parties in the debate had multiple roots, including humanistic thought. All parties accepted the pedagogical function of history. Adopting Cicero's classic definition of history as the "teacher of mankind," humanist educators had mined historical accounts, both secular and biblical, for their practical and moral lessons. The didactic value of history continued to be appreciated by educators in the confessional era. In addition, however, historical precedent was used to authenticate doctrinal positions. Here Catholics had the advantage over Protestants in that they could claim to be heirs to an unbroken tradition, from the early church through the Middle Ages to their own time. Catholic apologists therefore used antiquity as a legitimating principle. In an age that regarded innovation as intrinsically bad, the reformers' break with tradition and the resulting lack of historical roots was a source of embarrassment.[106] To locate their own place in the history of the church, reformers discredited Catholic tradition as a history of degeneration and human failings. They contrasted Catholic reliance on human consensus with their own exclusive reliance on the word of God, and reclaimed history by depicting themselves as God's chosen agents and interpreters. Thus the reformers constructed a new historical identity for themselves, in which they were seen as successors to the biblical prophets and their doctrine as the restoration of biblical teaching.

Witzel's approach to history as a tool of authentication and the role he envisaged for historians as preservers of tradition was "catholic" in a way that Erasmus' was not. While Witzel's argument was historical, Erasmus' was philological and epistemological. In discussing doctrine or interpreting biblical passages, Erasmus (like Witzel) showed a clear preference for the Fathers over medieval exegetes, but

this preference was based on respect for their philological expertise, that is, their ability to consult the original biblical texts and their knowledge of biblical languages, in which they surpassed the scholastics. The numerous citations of patristic authors in Erasmus' *Annotations on the New Testament* would seem at first glance aimed at authentication, but in fact served a more complex function. Unlike Witzel, Erasmus capitalized on the diversity of patristic interpretations and was unwilling to conceal it. He did not, in the typical manner of polemicists, suppress what did not suit his own thesis, but presented the reader with a full range of opinions. His purpose in citing patristic evidence was, in many cases, not to legitimate a particular interpretation but, on the contrary, to demonstrate the plurality of views and cast doubt on the possibility of discovering the "true" interpretation. He used this technique to condemn doctrinaire thinking and advocate latitudinarianism.[107] As a Catholic, Erasmus did use long-standing tradition and historical consensus as criteria of the doctrinal truth, but in his case, these criteria were used as a result of epistemological rather than historical considerations. In fact, he made provisions for the failure of a historical investigation (or any other rational method) to arrive at a consensus, by deferring in the last instance to the teaching authority of the church. In any case, Erasmus' efforts are directed, not at discovering a historical consensus, but at maintaining consensus in his own time or, failing that, preserving unity through submission to authority.

Both Witzel's and Erasmus' methods are rooted in humanistic approaches to history. Witzel's effort to authenticate doctrinal positions may be seen as a continuation of the method Valla had made notorious in his *Donation of Constantine*; Erasmus' use of historical witnesses to demonstrate the plurality of views and generate doubt utilizes the humanistic *ars dubitandi*. How did these humanistic methods fare in the Reformation debate? As we have seen, both parties in the religious debate wanted history to serve as a vehicle and expression of their respective ideologies. Both insisted on the possibility of a correct interpretation of the past. For Luther history was the "mother of truth" and the historian's task was to "cleanse words and deeds from falsehood extraneous to them and, after trimming them in the right way, to use them as proofs or analogies of faith."[108] Witzel's efforts attest to similar notions in the Catholic camp. Advocating a return to the pristine conditions of the early church, he too professed a desire to cleanse the church of later accretions. Both parties depicted this as an objective process, but the practices of polemicists often reflected an ideological purpose and, like Witzel's *Typus ecclesiae*, were not aimed at the Truth, but at a specific, preconceived truth. In rejecting a disinterested approach to historical research that might reveal inconsistencies, and constructing instead a historical tradition to support their own claims, both Catholic and reformed polemicists confessionalized the historian's task, that is, bent it to ideological purposes.

Joris Cassander and the Erasmian Heritage

Erasmus died in 1536, but the idea of accommodation was kept alive. It continued to be associated with his name and, given the perceptions current at the time, with

humanism in general. It was, however, a version stripped of the conceptual framework Erasmus had designed for it. The label "Erasmian" recalled its humanistic roots, but the practical efforts made in the 1550s and 1560s to achieve religious peace were more indebted to ideas associated with Quattrocento civic humanism than with Erasmus' brand of Christian Skepticism. In fact, the association with civic humanism seems particularly fitting in view of the political will that drove the peace process. The search for diplomatic solutions to serve political ends, deplored by Melanchthon as the secularization of religious issues,[109] was far removed from the Erasmian archetype. Erasmus had been a councillor to princes and addressed himself to political questions, but he always spoke as a Christian humanist. After his appointment as councillor to Charles, he offered general guidelines on statecraft in his *Institutio Christiani Principis* (The education of a Christian prince). It was no manual of political science, however, but a summary of the *philosophia Christi* applied to the art of government. In a second "political" tract, Erasmus offered counsel on war against the Ottoman Turks. Like his advice on ways to achieve religious peace, it was embedded in a Psalm commentary and rested substantially on an appeal to reform and to use spiritual rather than military weapons. *Concord* was similarly predicated on spiritual values and the repentance of sins, conditions that could not be fulfilled by proxy, through decrees passed in political assemblies, but clearly involved the conscience of the individual. All three tracts had a homiletic quality not usually found in political discourse. Short on concrete proposals, they were edifying rather than instructive, addressed to a Christian assembly rather than a council of state, and aiming at a practical solution only circuitously, through bringing about a spiritual change first. In its general thrust, Erasmus' counsel was not unlike the counsel offered by Joris Cassander, who was, beside Witzel, the most important Catholic champion of accommodation in the 1560s.

Cassander (1513–1566) was a graduate of the University of Louvain, where he earned his Master of Arts in 1533.[110] After teaching at Ghent and Bruges, he traveled in France, Italy, and Germany before settling down in Cologne in 1549.[111] His first published composition, an inaugural speech given at Bruges in 1541, identifies him as a humanist. He puts a high value on the study of letters: "The knowledge of letters, whether you call them belles lettres or humanities, not only effects that we speak better Latin . . . but this knowledge is also the most assured and the most necessary tool for attaining all important disciplines and the knowledge of the greatest things."[112] Cassander engaged in the typical pursuits of a humanist, producing textbooks and critical editions based on manuscript research,[113] but he was also keenly interested in religious questions. In 1544 he participated, along with Bucer, in the Cologne colloquy called by the reform-minded Archbishop Hermann von Wied. In 1561 he was invited to submit his views on reconciliation to Catherine of Medici, to guide her thoughts in the Colloquy of Poissy. His counsel was published anonymously under the title *De officio pii ac publicae tranquillitatis vere amantis viri in hoc religionis dissidio* (On the responsibility of the pious and true champion of public tranquillity in this time of religious strife) and fiercely attacked by Calvin for its supposed betrayal of religious principles to political interests.[114] Cassander's opinions were also consulted by the Archbishop of Trier and by the Duke of Jülich-Cleves, who asked him to help with the revision of the church order originally sanc-

tioned by Erasmus. In 1564, finally, Ferdinand (now German emperor) invited him, together with Witzel and Bishop Friedrich Nausea, to comment on the outstanding issues in the religious dispute. In his letter of invitation, Ferdinand noted that the Augsburg Confession had been the starting point for a number of religious colloquies. He wished to resume negotiations, hoping that a common understanding could be reached if abuses were corrected, if concessions were made "in points that were a matter of positive rather than divine law," and if settlement of "disputed points that were too subtle and abtruse, beyond the understanding of the common people, and not absolutely essential to their salvation, were deferred to more auspicious times." The report was to be a *summarium* of Catholic doctrine, clarifying what was acceptable in the Augsburg Confession, what could be conceded in the interest of unity and peace and without endangering the Catholic faith, and what, on the contrary, could not be conceded and was against Catholic faith. The purpose of the summary was to put into the hands of "parish priests and preachers in our realms and provinces a guideline (*methodus*) to which to adjust their teaching as to a rule."[115] Cassander's report, published posthumously under the title *De articulis religionis inter catholicos et protestantes controversis consultatio* (Consultation concerning the religious articles about which there is disagreement between Catholics and Protestants), was delivered in 1565 after Ferdinand's death to his successor, Maximilian II.[116]

An examination of Cassander's writings suggests that he was in fact more Erasmian than Witzel, who had been accused of pirating Erasmus' thought. Although he had no personal contact with the Dutch humanist, as far as we know, his writings have a palpable Erasmian air, and he cites Erasmus extensively in his letters, in his reply to Calvin's attack, and in his *Consultatio* for the Viennese court.[117] Indeed, he explicitly compares attacks on his own proposals for religious peace with those suffered by Erasmus: "But observe the thanks we get. We are struck and stoned by both parties—as the famous Erasmus says, lamenting his own experience."[118]

Cassander's methods resemble those of Erasmus. Following Erasmus' practice in the *Diatribe*, he recommends considering arguments on both sides of a question and "comparing them with equal attention and fair judgment." He himself had resolved "to abstain from any partisan spirit, put aside all prejudice, and keep an open mind in passing judgment."[119] He set out his method in the preface to the *Consultatio*, "because every discussion must be based on fixed principles."[120] Strictly speaking, Scripture was the sole principle (*unicum principium*) on which all discussion must be based; however, the meaning of Scripture was sometimes subject to debate. In that case one must look to universal and long-standing consensus as the most solid testimony to the truth (*consensum universalem vetustissimarum ecclesiarum tamquam . . . publicum et firmissimum testimonium*). The best sources were the writings of the early Fathers, "from the time of Constantine to the age of Leo, or even Gregory," that is, up to the sixth century. It is clear, however, that Cassander was not thinking of a mechanical tally of opinions or of a historical investigation in Witzel's sense, but regarded these sources as inspirational. The parties would arrive at a consensus, not on the basis of collations and research, but as a result of "concessions made . . . out of Christian charity and . . . tolerance and forbearance for the sake of peace." The process envisaged by Cassander, then, was based on sociopolitical

rather than theological, epistemological, or strictly historical considerations.[121] He repeated these four points of procedure—reading Scripture, consulting the early Fathers, taking into account long-standing tradition, and demonstrating the will to compromise—at the end of his preface: "Holy Writ ought to have the greatest authority. Secondly, there are those testimonies that rest on the consensus of authors of old, . . . that are plausible on the basis of Holy Writ. Accepted practices of the church come next, . . . and should have third place in authority. . . . And then it will be helpful if the two parties compare what has been written with moderation."[122]

Although Cassander's criteria resemble those of Erasmus in their emphasis on tradition and consensus, we do not find in his writings an epistemological justification of this method. It should be noted, moreover, that Cassander himself specifically and repeatedly credits Vincent of Lérins as the source from which he drew these criteria. In an undated letter to a friend, the physician Johannes Reidan, he writes: "I like the formula prescribed by Vincent of Lérins, who proposes two criteria in settling controversies: the canonical authority of Scriptural passages; and Catholic tradition which is distinguished by antiquity, universality, and consensus." In a letter to Nicolaus Gandavus, he repeats this testimony: "Although I see that not everyone agrees on the status [of prayers] and therefore cannot give you a definitive opinion . . . Vincent of Lérins says: 'in addition to the authority of the [scriptural] canon, I accept also Catholic tradition as its true and pure interpreter, distinguished by antiquity, universality, and consensus.'"[123] The language he uses to recommend Vincent's approach, however, is full of commonplaces and figures of speech that link his ideals with earlier advocates of prudence and moderation: with the golden mean recommended by Aristotle, with Homer's prudent hero Ulysses (via Erasmus), and with the biblical *via regia*, Witzel's favorite term. Truth, Cassander says, "is a certain point between two extremes that are wrong"; finding it was like "sailing between Scylla and Charybdis, as Erasmus once put it so lucidly, or, as Holy Scripture says, to go along the Royal Road and deviate neither to the right or the left."[124] We also discover in Cassander's writings shades of Bucer's view that the corrupt church remained a true church insofar as it contained traces of the true gospel teaching.[125] Abuse and corruption, which were certainly present in the church, had altered its face but not its essence, he said. It did not make sense therefore to deny the corrupt church the name "Catholic" or, vice versa, to call the reformers "schismatics." A common nucleus remained: "Whatever therefore I find sound and unadulterated and in agreement with Scripture and the Apostolic tradition in either part of the church—whether it is called by the old name 'Catholic' or the recently created name 'Evangelical'—I respect and accept as Christ's church proper."[126] He recognizes that there are men of sound judgment in both Catholic and evangelical churches (he mentions Bucer, Brenz, and Melanchthon by name) and sees the resolution of conflicts in practicing "Christian moderation."[127]

What Cassander has to say about the style of the religious debate echoes humanistic ideals, as expressed in the writings of Erasmus, Mosellanus, and Vives.[128] In the preface to his *Consultatio* he explains that "in undertaking any dispute with a party of adversaries, one must use common principles that have been conceded by both parties and . . . [in matters of religion] principles must be established by consensus." Like earlier humanists, he emphasizes that the adversarial approach must

be replaced by a more accommodating attitude, that the adversary must be persuaded rather than overcome. In fact, concessions were not enough, consensus was the *summum desideratum*. Cassander also shared the emphasis on *aptum* we have found in the writings of Erasmus and fellow humanists. He urged the protagonists to consider the circumstances and take action only "if the situation permits."[129] Similar considerations should also govern their speech. They must dispense the truth prudently, without however resorting to falsehood: "Do not speak your mind rashly and everywhere, but do not ever say what is contrary to your opinion." The language in which the religious debate was conducted mattered a great deal to Cassander. He loathed name-calling, "one side calling the other papists, Antichrists, servants of Satan, enemies of Christ's teaching; the other side, in turn, calling their opponents heretics, schismatics, apostates, and enemies of the church of Christ. Such words merely feed the fatal schism and the wretched demolition of the church."[130]

Echoing the advice contained in Erasmus' *Concord*, Cassander voiced misgivings about introducing change unnecessarily or through revolutionary means. He approved of change only "if it was done by public authority and with a minimum of scandal." He was prepared to suffer corrupt practices "for the sake of peace and unity, until by lawful authority they are either restored to their original purpose or the usage is abandoned." The right to introduce change was reserved to official spokesmen of the Catholic church who were "endowed with the prophetic spirit and divinely inspired" and thus could "speak up against transgressions of the divine law." Concerning ceremonies, Cassander believed that in anything that "does not manifestly contradict Holy Writ one must not proceed aggressively. I do not think that for their sake the peace of the church should be disturbed." There was no need "to fight everywhere or passionately; instead one should let scholars and moderate minds inquire and discuss peacefully, in my opinion." In a striking parallel to Erasmus' precept in *Concord*, Cassander advised that "it was best to leave individuals free to adopt the course of their choice" if plausible arguments could be advanced on both sides.[131] Indeed, he was in favor of a certain latitude in nonessential points: "I do not think that Catholic unity is compromised if some members of the church disagree among themselves in polemics that do not touch on the principles of faith, lest the bond of peace and charity be broken."[132] The preservation of public peace was Cassander's foremost concern. The radical methods of the reformers repelled him. He wished to see the practices of the church "purified and emended, not abolished and cast away."

Cassander's advice, then, resembles Erasmian thought in many respects. It is, however, tendered without a philosophical rationale and explicable entirely in terms of irenic feelings and loyalty to the conventions of the old church. Cassander promotes his ideas as commonsense and practicable, substituting political for logical or historical necessity. The laws of the church are "like the laws of the state," he says, "without which society cannot exist, or be governed or maintained."[133] Preserving the unity of the church is for Cassander a matter of preserving peace and feelings of Christian charity. As mentioned earlier, the Duke of Jülich-Cleves consulted Cassander concerning his church order, as his predecessor had consulted Erasmus thirty years earlier. The commission formally cast Cassander in the role of Erasmus' heir. Of course "Erasmianism" had by then become a metaphor for irenicism and a

willingness to compromise, both in the good sense of love of peace and the bad sense of a lack of commitment to principles. Using the label "Erasmian" did not necessarily entail an acquaintance with Erasmus' writings, just as using the terms "Machiavellian" or "Platonic" today does not entail familiarity with the works of Machiavelli or Plato.[134]

On the whole, the 1560s were not propitious for peace initiatives, Erasmian or otherwise, as Cassander himself acknowledged. Religious colloquies had become a ritual more conducive to posturing than to negotiating, to affirmation than to collaboration.[135] Opposition to irenic efforts were voiced even at the court of the conciliatory Maximilian II in Vienna. In 1573 Georg Eder, rector of the University, published an invective against the peacemakers, "those men who are half-Lutheran and half-popish, yet not completely of either party. They turn their coats to the wind, choosing their position according to the weathervane."[136] Cassander was aware of the unpopularity of his approach: "Clearly the position of those who wish to play the role and undertake the task of peacemakers is wretched and fraught with danger," he said. Europe was divided by religious factions. "In places where party stalwarts govern, advocates of neutrality and moderation are barely tolerated; indeed, they are often regarded as enemies by both parties and suffer exile or danger to their possessions and their lives. They are unwilling to admit anyone to their society who does not agree with them in everything and approves of all their practices or who does not bitterly oppose the other party as inimical." Even in places where a more moderate attitude prevailed and lovers of peace were allowed to settle, "they cannot escape the charge of lacking gravity and commitment, or of being fearful and hypocritical. They are treated with contempt and hatred, accused of shallowness and timidity, and regarded with suspicion."[137]

Epilogue

At first blush, the confessionalization of humanism seems to follow a familiar pattern in history: new trends absorbing, but not completely obliterating, old trends. What distinguishes the interaction of the Reformation with humanism from similar processes, however, is the chronology of events and the rate of change that characterized them. In general, a movement is superseded by another when it has run its course and exhausted its vitality, but when Luther rose to prominence, the dynamics that shaped the relationship between humanism and the Reformation could hardly be described in terms of new superseding old. Both movements were young then, and both showed the vitality, aggressiveness, and contempt for tradition that is characteristic of new movements. For a while, therefore, they progressed in lockstep. Even when the religious movement evolved as the dominant force, it did not absorb humanism but selectively suppressed or enhanced its development. The Reformation diverted significant humanistic sources into its own channel, but did not harness its entire stream of thought. The subordinate role that humanism played because its appeal was limited to the educated class meant that its champions could not impose their views on the religious protagonists at will; rather, the extent and the area of their contribution to the debate was determined by the religious movement.

The interaction between humanism and the Reformation also differed from earlier cultural encounters in that the protagonists were the first generation to take full advantage in their propaganda war of the print medium and the rise of vernacular languages. The tactics of stereotyping the enemy and constructing an ideologically slanted history were not new, but the ease with which propaganda could be spread and the large readership it reached was a recent phenomenon. This made public opinion volatile and in consequence, the relationship, or certainly the perception of the relationship, between the two movements subject to fluctuations and change. Within fifty years humanists, it seemed, turned from allies of the reformers into foes or traitors, and finally, through the shotgun marriage of confessionalization, into partners.

In the second half of the century, the Reformation moved from the activist to the settlement phase. The difference between the radical beginnings of confessionalization in the early part of the sixteenth century and its smoother, quieter course fifty years later is neatly exemplified in the lives of Matteo Gribaldi Mofa (c. 1500–1564)

and Justus Lipsius (1547–1606). Gribaldi, a professor of law in Padua, gave up his lectureship because of his pro-Reformation stance and moved to Tübingen. There he was accused of heterodox views on the Trinity, lost his position, and moved to the Catholic University of Grenoble. Predictably, he did not last at that institution and was obliged to retire into private life. Thus his career at both Catholic and Lutheran universities was cut short on account of his religious views. The classical scholar and philosopher Justus Lipsius, by contrast, was able to pursue an academic career successively at a Catholic, Lutheran, and Calvinist institution by superficially conforming to the prevailing orthodoxy. After serving as secretary to Antoine Perrenot, Cardinal Granvelle, in Rome, he taught briefly at Louvain in 1570 and, after trying in vain to obtain patronage at the Catholic court of Vienna, accepted a position at the Lutheran University of Jena in 1572. A year later he returned to Louvain and taught there until 1578, when he accepted a position at the newly founded University of Leiden in the largely Calvinist Netherlands. In 1591, however, he once again embraced the Catholic faith, and the following year was appointed historiographer to the King of Spain. The experiences of the two men were of course conditioned by their respective abilities and personalities, but they point to a waning of the radical spirit that had characterized the first phase of the Reformation. Conversely, humanists adjusted to confessionalization and learned to function in a controlled and circumscribed sphere.

Charles Nauert has noted that humanism is hard to trace in the later Renaissance: "It seemed to melt away since its very success made it no longer seem a distinct and challenging movement."[1] Adapting Nauert's general observation to the fate of humanism in Reformation Germany, one might say that it blended into the cultural landscape and was no longer distinct because the protagonists of the debate had transformed it to suit their own purposes, had made it their own through confessionalization. Whether this marriage between religion and culture can be called a success is another matter. It was a success when viewed against the alternatives, as contemplated by Lewis Spitz: "A difference in leadership, Müntzer instead of Luther, Amsdorf instead of Melanchthon, Farel instead of Calvin, might well have sent the revolution spiralling off onto an anti-intellectual or at least unhumanistic course. A successful proletarian revolution might have brutalized culture and wiped out the hard-won refinements of centuries. Wars might have broken out sooner, before the cultural transition from Renaissance to Reformation had been effected."[2] The marriage between culture and religion was not a success when viewed against another scenario that might have been, had confessionalization not circumscribed the progress of humanism: the development of a humanistic philosophy in the form of Christian skepticism; the development of principles of textual criticism and their consistent application to secular and biblical texts alike; the harmonization of rhetorical and dialectical proofs to end the antagonism between humanists and scholastics; the development of a coherent historical method. In all of these areas, confessionalization proved to be a retardant rather than a facilitator. Erich Meuthen, examining the character and tendencies of German humanism, was right to observe the contrast between "a climate that was less theologically determined, such as prevailed in Quattrocento Italy" and Reformation Germany where humanism "had to fit in with and subject itself to the dominant interests, which were religious."[3] It is

not surprising that the confessionalization of humanism served the forces driving it—institutionalized churches—rather than the republic of letters, which, in spite of its name, was never an organized body but rested on the intangible bonds of scholarly friendship. But perhaps the free flow of humanistic ideas was stemmed, not by a specific movement, but by the historical coincidence in sixteenth-century Germany of two new movements rising to popularity simultaneously and vying for the public's attention. The business of deciding for or against Luther, Juan Luis Vives observed in 1524, crowded out scholarly issues, denying other currents of thought the mental space necessary for expansion and development:. "It drove from men's hearts all concern for other studies."[4]

Notes

Abbreviations

Allen	Erasmus, Desiderius. *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami*. Ed. P. S. Allen. Oxford, 1906–1958.
ASD	Erasmus, Desiderius. *Opera omnia Des. Erasmi Roterodami*. Amsterdam, 1969– .
CEBR	Bietenholz, P., and Deutscher T., eds. *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, 3 vols. Toronto, 1985–87.
CO	Joannis Calvini *Opera quae supersunt omnia*, ed. G. Baum et al. Braunschweig, 1863–1900
CR	Melanchthon, Philip. *Opera quae supersunt omnia*. In *Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. C. Bretschneider vols. 1–28. Halle, 1834–1860.
CWE	Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Collected Works of Erasmus*. Toronto, 1974– .
CWM	More, Thomas. *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More*. New Haven, 1963–1986.
LB	Erasmus, Desiderius. *Des. Erasmi Roterodami Opera omnia*. Ed. J. Leclerc. Leiden, 1703–1706.
WA	M. Luther, *Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe*. Weimar 1883–
WA Br	refers to the series "Briefe" within WA

Introduction

1. *Theologische Realenzyklopedie* (Berlin-New York, 1990), 19: 426: "die betonte und sich in der Regel gegen andere Ausprägungen des Christlichen bewusst abgrenzende Wahrnehmung der eigenen Konfession." See also the definition in E. Zeeden, *Konfessionsbildung: Studien zur Reformation, Gegenreformation und katholischen Reform* (Stuttgart, 1985), 69: "die geistige und organisatorische Verfestigung . . . nach Dogma, Verfassung und religiös-sittlicher Lebensform . . . ihre Abschirmung gegen Einbrüche von aussen mit den Mitteln der Diplomatie und Politik; aber auch ihre Gestaltung durch ausserkirchliche Kräfte, insbesonders die Staatsgewalt."

2. Schilling describes confessionalization as a cardinal process in the historical development of the modern age ("ein Kardinalprozess . . . ohne den es keine europäische Neuzeit gegeben hätte," the expression he uses in "Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft" in W. Reinhard and H. Schilling, eds., *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung* [Gütersloh, 1995], 41).

Strictly speaking the formation of confessions ("confessionalism") should be distinguished from its effect on society in general ("confessionalization"). Failure to distinguish between the two concepts is censured as negligence ("Sprachnachlässigkeit") by Heinz

Schilling. He insists that the formation of confessions is essentially a subject for theologians and church historians, whereas confessionalization is in the realm of general historiography (see his article "Die 'zweite Reformation' als Kategorie der Geschichtswissenschaft," in a volume edited by him, *Die reformierte Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland—Das Problem der 'Zweiten Reformation'* [Gütersloh, 1986], 454). However, the distinction is increasingly disregarded in contemporary literature, as Johannes Wallmann notes in "Lutherische Konfessionalisierung—Ein Überblick," in H. Rublack, ed., *Die Lutherische Konfessionalisierung in Deutschland* (Gütersloh, 1992), 35.

3. See H. Schilling, *Religion, Politics, Culture and the Emergence of Early Modern Society* (Leiden, 1992), esp. 207–10; Schilling, *Konfessionskonflikt und Staatsbildung* (Heidelberg, 1981); W. Reinhard, "Konfession und Konfessionalisierung in Europa," in *Bekenntnis und Geschichte: die Confessio Augustana im historischen Zusammenhang*, ed. H. Immenkötter et al. (Munich, 1981), 165–89; and E. Zeeden (see note 1). For a summary and bibliography on the subject, see H. Schilling, "Confessional Europe," in *Handbook of European History, 1400–1600*, ed. T. Brady et al. (Leiden, 1995), 2: 641–81. On Lutheran confessionalization see J. Wallmann (see note 2); on Catholic confessionalization see W. Reinhard, "Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?" in Reinhard and Schilling, *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung* (Gütersloh, 1995), 419–52.

4. "Kulturbedeutung, die sich auf das Ganze der menschlichen Seelenhaltung bezieht," as E. Troeltsch put it. See Troeltsch, "Das Verhältnis des Protestantismus zur Kultur," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. H. Baron (Tübingen, 1925), 4: 191–201. The quotation is on p. 191.

5. B. Moeller, "Die deutschen Humanisten und die Anfänge der Reformation," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 70 (1959): 46–61; the quotation is on p. 59. The following is a selection from the extensive literature on the relationship between humanism and the Reformation: C. Augustijn, "Humanisten auf dem Scheideweg zwischen Luther und Erasmus," in *Humanismus und Reformation: Martin Luther und Erasmus von Rotterdam in den Konflikten ihrer Zeit*, ed. O. Pesch (Zurich, 1985), 119–34; Augustijn, "Die Stellung der Humanisten zur Glaubensspaltung 1518–1530," in *Confessio Augustana und Confutatio*, ed. E. Iserloh (Münster, 1979), 36–48; G. Livet, "Humanisme allemand, réforme et civilisation européenne," in *L'Humanisme allemand (1480–1540)*, ed. J.-C. Margolin (Munich, 1979); E. Meuthen, "Charakter und Tendenzen des deutschen Humanismus," in *Säkulare Aspekte der Reformationszeit*, ed. H. Angermeier (Munich, 1983), 217–61; S. Ozment, "Humanism, Scholasticism, and the Intellectual Origins of the Reformation," *Continuity and Discontinuity in Church History*, ed. F. Church and T. George (Leiden, 1979), 133–49; H. Scheible, "Melanchthon zwischen Luther und Erasmus," in *Renaissance-Reformation: Gegensätze und Gemeinsamkeiten*, ed. A. Buck (Wiesbaden, 1984), 155–79; L. Spitz, *The Religious Renaissance of the German Humanists* (Cambridge, 1964); Spitz, "Humanism in the Reformation," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. A. Molho and J. Tedeschi (Dekalb, 1971), 643–61; Spitz, "Humanism and the Protestant Reformation," in *Renaissance Humanism*, ed. A. Rabil (Philadelphia, 1988), 3: 381–411; R. Stupperich, "Humanismus und Reformation in ihren gegenseitigen Beziehungen," in *Humanismusforschung seit 1945*, ed. A. Buck (Boppard, 1975), 41–57; J. Tracy, "Humanism and the Reformation," in *Reformation Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. S. Ozment (St. Louis, 1986), 33–57.

6. The question of periodization is discussed and summed up in H. Schilling, "Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft," 31–35.

7. For a fuller discussion of the terms see chapter 1.

8. T. Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness: Philip Melanchthon's Exegetical Dispute with Erasmus of Rotterdam* (Oxford, 1998), concludes that the problems experienced by modern historians in analyzing the relationship between the two men was the result of a failure to make this distinction and to recognize the fact "that almost without exception

praise for Erasmus arose from the older man's abilities as a grammarian and linguist, not from his theological prowess" (9).

9. Liebing in *Humanismus, Reformation, Konfession: Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte*, ed. W. Bienert and W. Hage (Marburg, 1986), 147–62; for Meuthen see note 5.

10. "Im Schutz der Staats- und Landeskirchen. . . . konnte es diese Bildung zu eigenen literarischen und wissenschaftlichen Leistungen bringen, deren Niveau sich über das für jedermann Selbstverständliche erhob" (Liebing, 156); "Der unkonfessionelle Humanismus verzichtet auf die Schule und auf das hohe Mass an Dauer,an Stabilität. . . . Um den Preis der Unsicherheit und Kurzlebigkeit gewann er die Freiheit, seine Thematik selbst zu bestimmen" (160).

11. "Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?" 437–38. Reinhard counters the fallacious argument that there was no break in the Catholic tradition and that one cannot therefore speak of a Catholic confessionalization.

12. Reinhard, "Konfession und Konfessionalisierung," 180–88; see also the schematic representation in "Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?" 426–27.

13. Liebing, "Die Ausgänge," 159: "das Fehlen eines politischen Humanismus."

Chapter One

1. Erasmus credited Franciscans with coining the phrase. See Allen, Ep. 1528:11 (*Ego peperi ovum, Lutherus exclusit*).

2. LB, 9: 519F–520A.

3. *Epistolario*, ed. F. Novati (Rome, 1891), 4: 183–84; on the original meaning of *humanista* see P. Grendler, "The Concept of 'Humanist' in Cinquecento Italy," in A. Molho and J. Tedeschi, *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron* (Dekalb, 1971), 447–63; the view that the term "humanist" did not denote merely a professional activity or a certain educational background but an outlook was first advanced by E. Garin, e.g., in *Italian Humanism, Philosophy and Civic Life in the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1965), 1–17.

4. For a comprehensive definition see E. Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate in the Renaissance and the Reformation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995), 11–14; C. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 1995), 8–10.

5. On this subject and for the examples cited see E. Rummel, "The Importance of Being Doctor: The Quarrel Over Competency Between Humanists and Theologians in the Renaissance," *The Catholic Historical Review* 82 (1996) 189–93.

6. Manuscipt, shelf mark R 2212; the comment on sig. a iv recto reads: *Antonius somniabat delirans ac insipide faciebat qui judicem se offert et proinde mittens falcem in messem alienam . . . judicat.*

7. See p. 12.

8. For a recent account see J. Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany* (Princeton, 1984), 247–97, and the bibliographical review in H. Peterse, *Jacobus Hoogstraeten gegen Johannes Reuchlin* (Mainz, 1995), 13–15.

9. The satire appeared anonymously, first in 1515 and, in a significantly expanded version, in 1517. A number of humanists collaborated on it, but Ulrich von Hutten and Crotus Rubeanus were the chief contributors. For the Latin text, followed by an English translation, see *Letters of Obscure Men*, ed. F. Griffin Stokes (London, 1909). In the following the letters are referred to by book and number of letter, according to the arrangement in Stokes' edition.

10. "I can't tell you how much I admire their ingenuity," Lorenz Beheim wrote to Willibald Pirckheimer, who had sent him a copy. "How cleverly they disparage . . . bad theologians!" (Böcking 1: 133).

11. *Illustrium virorum epistolae* (Haguenau, 1519), zii recto.

12. *Letters*, 2.33.

13. I have not had access to the Latin text of Aesticampianus' speech in *Neues Lausitzisches Magazin* 10 (1872): 187–99. The German text is in O. Clemen, *Kleine Schriften zur Reformationsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1982), 1: 236–40. The following quotations are translations from that text and appear in Clemen's edition on pp. 263–64.

14. *Letters* 1.17. By the time the *Letters* appeared in print, Aesticampianus had appealed the ban to the Roman curia, but the outcome was uncertain at the time and was still undecided when Aesticampianus died in 1520.

15. *Letters*, 2.9.

16. *Letters*, 2.51, 2.68.

17. *Epistolae aliquot eruditorum virorum* (Basel, 1520), 169 and 171–72.

18. L. Geiger, *Johann Reuchlins Briefwechsel* (Tübingen, 1875; repr. 1962), Ep. 269 (1518) to Cardinal Achilles de Crassis; among the jurists Reuchlin mentions Petrus of Ravenna, Sebastian Brant, and Peutinger; the other men in his list, Pirckheimer, Hutten, and Neuenahr, are presumably examples of "poets."

19. *Apologia adversus calumnias* (s.l. 1533), C vii recto.

20. *Christoph Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 146, 192. On Scheurl see pp. 81–84.

21. CWE, Ep. 1095: 82–95; W. Pirckheimer, *Opera*, 374.

22. Melchior Vadianus, brother of the reformer, writing from Rome, 1520 (E. Arbenz, ed., *Die Vadianische Briefsammlung der Stadtbibliothek St. Gallen*, St. Gallen, 1894, 2: 264).

23. C. Krause, *Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus* (Kassel, 1885), Ep. 634. Evangelical and humanistic causes are mixed also in a letter of Count Hermann of Neuenahr, a champion of the New Learning and a humanist in his own right. Comparing Reuchlin's experience with Erasmus', he writes: "The same fate, Erasmus, awaits you." Neuenahr sees Erasmus as both a humanist and a theologian, a man who has "the genuine spirit of a true theologian" and at the same time has the interests of *bona studia* at heart (CWE, Ep. 1078: 32–44).

24. For an illustration see H. Weissenborn, *Acten der Erfurter Universität* (Halle, 1884), 2: 152.

25. *Czen neuw nutzliche und lustige Dialogi* (n.l. [1522]). The following quotations are on B ii verso.

26. *Prima Pars Operum . . . Martini Lutheri* (Wittenberg, n.p., 1520), preface in Herminjard 1: 62.

27. A. Horawitz and K. Hartfelder, eds., *Der Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus* (Leipzig, 1886; repr. Hildesheim, 1966), 213.

28. Herminjard, 1: 72–73.

29. Of 1520, by Jacob Spiegel; see *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, 221.

30. WA I 574, VI 184–85.

31. O. Schade, *Satiren und Pasquillen aus der Reformationszeit* (repr. Hildesheim, 1966), 1: 19–26.

32. E. Staehelin, ed. *Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oekolampads* (Leipzig 1927), 1: 89 (1519).

33. O. Schade, *Satiren und Pasquillen*, 3: 49. Böcking 1: 46. For a more detailed examination of the contents see M. U. Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform: German Lay Propaganda Pamphlets, 1519–1530* (Atlantic Highlands, 1996), 112–14.

34. We find this slant also in another dialogue, *Karsthans*, which links Jan Hus, Reuchlin, and Luther. According to the speaker they were victimized because they dared to challenge "Ketzermeister," or arch-heretics (O. Clemen, *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation* [Halle, 1911; repr. Nieuwkoop, 1967], 4: 91).

35. Lists of names suggesting that humanism inspired or promoted the Reformation endured in Protestant historiography. Friedrich Myconius offers this synopsis in his *History of*

the Reformation, composed in 1541: "Scholars in Germany had become complete barbarians. But a few years before the evangelical movement started, God gave to Germany the correct and pure studies of the three languages. And these were the principal founders: Rudolf Agricola, a Frisian, now buried at Heidelberg, published an improved *Dialectic*; Johannes Reuchlin of Pforzheim first introduced Germany to the study of Hebrew and composed a grammar and a dictionary, which had previously not been available in German. And he also made a beginning of Greek studies. He was succeeded by Erasmus of Roterodam, Joannes Oecolampadius, Hutten, and Philip Melanchthon. They introduced pure Latin and Greek in schools. All this happened between 1510 and 1530 . . . and these were the foremost people and heroes who became partisans of Luther and helped introduce, preserve, and advance the cause, some with their writing and preaching, others with excellent sermons and kind advice" (*Friedrich Myconius. Geschichte der Reformation*, ed. O. Clemen [Leipzig, 1890], 39–40).

36. Text and translation in E. Reinke, *The Dialogues of Andreas Meinhardi: A Utopian Description of Wittenberg and Its University, 1508* (Ann Arbor, 1976).

37. Reinke, 85 (*adulterina palaestra*).

38. The quarrel over the hierarchy of disciplines led to a spat of academic feuds and pamphlet wars at German universities in the first decade of the sixteenth century. For an account of the most representative cases see J. Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism in Late Medieval Germany*, 173–264 (for Wimpina's feud with Polich of Mellerstadt see 173–85).

39. One might say the polemic contained pre-Reformation elements. The poet Sigismund Fagilucus, whose disdainful remarks about theology had sparked the controversy, had cast aspersions on monasticism. Polich questioned the theologian's undue reliance on Aristotle and the scholastic doctors. Such criticism foreshadows the complaints of the reformers. See Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*, 183.

40. Officially, the publication, copies of which were burned by angry students in March 1518 in Wittenberg, was ascribed to Tetzel, but information about the real author had reached Wittenberg by that time, and in 1528 Wimpina published the work under his own name in a collection of his writings. On the affair, see W. E. Winterhager, "Die Disputation gegen Luthers Ablassthesen an der Universität Frankfurt/Oder im Winter 1518," *Wichmann-Jahrbuch des Diözesangeschichtsvereins Berlin* 36/7 (1997): 129–67, esp. 130–37.

41. For a description see O. Clemen, "Litterarische Nachspiele zur Leipziger Disputation," *Beiträge zur sächsischen Kirchengeschichte* 12 (1898): 56–83.

42. Rubius (sometimes spelled Rubeus) entitled his report *Solutiones ac responsa Wittenbergensium doctorum in publica disputatione Lipsica contra fulmina Eckiana* . . . (Leipzig: Landsberg, 1519). Rubius was a student of the Franciscan Martin Alveldt; see Johannes Eisenmann in *Encomium Rubii* (see note 50): "I can easily guess the source at which he drank this vinegar: from a monk of the Franciscan order whom I heard at Leipzig" (*Encomium Rubii*, A iv recto).

43. *Solutiones*, B vi recto; Rubius reports indignantly that some people compared Eck's voice to the lowing of a bull.

44. *Solutiones*, B iv recto.

45. *Solutiones*, B ii verso.

46. *Solutiones*, B v recto.

47. *De vera et constanti serie theologice disputationis Lipsiace epistola* (Augsburg: Grimm, 1519). Cellarius Gnostopolitanus (i.e., of Kunstadt in Bohemia) had hoped for a position in Wittenberg, but when the negotiations stalled, he accepted a position in Leipzig.

48. Cellarius, *Epistola*, A ii recto, A iii recto. To put Cellarius' praise in perspective, it should be remembered that Melanchthon, whose loyalty to Luther was beyond doubt, also commented on Eck's impressive memory in his report on the debate, CR, vol. 1, 96.

49. Cellarius, *Epistola*, A iv recto.

50. *Encomium Rubii Longipolli apud Lipsim in errores quos pueriliter commisit adversus Wittenbergensem* . . . (Breslau: Dyon, 1519), reprinted in Leipzig and Wittenberg in the same year.

51. The reply is in doggerel verse:

> Ist Rubius on alle lar, eyn esel und ein kyndt, seys Got geklagt
> das die schul czu Wittenberg yn czu einem baccalarius hat gemacht
> und von dem Rubeo hat genummen das Gelt vorwar
> und hat ym (als der Nemo saget) geben keyn kunst und lar.

(*Ein neues Büchlein von der löblichen Disputation in Leipzig* . . . , Leipzig: Schumann, 1519). For a modern edition of this text see A. Laube, ed., *Flugschriften der frühen Reformationsbewegung, 1518–24* (Vaduz, 1983), 2: 1257–84. The verses quoted are on p. 1280.

52. Eisenmann, *Encomium*, A i verso.

53. *Encomium*, A iii recto; similarly A iv verso: "It is furthermore clear that the Wittenberg doctors ran an enormous risk, partly because of the sophists who have always been very hostile toward them, partly because of the monks whose greatest desire it is to suppress the rise of letters and of the truth."

54. *Encomium*, B i verso, B iii recto.

55. *Judicium Joannis Cellarii de Martino Luthero* ([Leipzig], 1520). The quotation is on A ii recto.

56. *Quid rei bonis studiis cum fidei negotio?* (Allen, Ep. 1033: 208).

57. CWE, Ep. 1167:113–14; Allen, Epp. 2315: 299–300; 2443:55–56.

58. Preface to *De rhetorica* (CR 1: 63).

59. *Melanchthon's Briefwechsel* 1: 112, 129, 149.

60. CR 20: 701

61. *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, 281. For Alber, see pp. 89, 104, 126.

62. *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, 107.

63. In a letter from the Literary Society of Selestat, of which Bucer was a signatory: "We had a long discussion about better studies and their leading lights, Erasmus, Capito, Zasius, Martin Luther, Philip Melanchthon, Petrus Mosellanus, Eobanus Hessus, Urbanus Rhegius, and others" (*Correspondance de Martin Bucer*, ed. C. Krieger and J. Rott, Leiden 1995, 1: Ep. 13).

64. *Correspondance*, 1: 164.

65. *Correspondance*, 1: 295 (November 1524, Bucer and colleagues to Luther).

66. Zwingli, *Werke*, 7: 139; 8: 543. On their relationship see G. Locher, "Zwingli and Erasmus," *Erasmus in English* 10 (1979–80): 2–11.

67. Zwingli, *Werke*, 9: 452; see Erasmus in CWE 40: 1103: "[In the colloquy] I reproach those who with much ado have thrown all images out of the churches."

68. Bucer, *Correspondance*, 3: 18 (in 1527, to Council of Strasbourg).

69. *Die Vadianische Briefsammlung*, 247 (1522).

70. Allen, Ep. 1690: 66–67.

71. Herminjard 1: 26.

72. WA Br III 96, Allen, Ep. 1443;13–20, 58–59. Erasmus recognized Luther's strategy and complained that it put him at a disadvantage. He had used his name, entangled him in the Reformation business, and "thereby placed a burden of unpopularity on the humanities"(in 1521, CWE, Ep. 1186:1–2, cf. Ep. 1185: 22–23).

73. *Briefe und Akten*, 279, 434.

74. CWE, Ep. 1161: 18–21, 46–47 and Ep. 1135: 48–49; interestingly, Hutten suggests in his *Expostulatio* that Erasmus could not but help the Lutheran cause: "Even against your will

your auxiliary troops are in our camp, I mean your early writings which were better than what you produced later on" (Böcking 2: 234).

75. Böcking, Suppl. 2, 803–4; Zwingli, *Werke*, 7: 494.

76. See T. Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*, 26; see Wengert's detailed analysis of Melanchthon's views on the dispute over free will, 67–79.

77. Peter of Ravenna was one of the first to raise the notion of a conspiracy after the Cologne theologians accused him of trespassing on their turf. He typecast the theologians as enemies of the humanists in the appendix of his *Alphabetum aureum* (1511). Conrad Peutinger, the learned Augsburg antiquarian, likewise claimed that the theologians were plotting against the humanists. Giving a brief account of the Reuchlin affair in a letter to Mutianus Rufus, he characterized Reuchlin's accusers, the theologians of Cologne, as "people who are ill disposed toward the humanities." They were determined to keep the power in their own hands and, to intimidate good men, "were hurling javelins of rage and envy, unleashing the thunder and lightning of their turbulent passions" (*Konrad Peutingers Briefwechsel*, ed. E. König, Munich, 1923, Ep. 125). Mutianus Rufus repeated Peutinger's sentiments in a letter to Musardus: "They cast aspersions on the name of the poets and call the aficionados of poetry, *behmen* (Bohemians), or *walen* (Waldensians) in German" (*Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus*, Ep. 216). In other words, they identified the humanists with the disciples of the heretical Hus. Thomas More noted this propensity in theologians, when he defended Erasmus against the Carthusian John Batmanson. He had called Erasmus "the harbinger of Antichrist" merely because he was a humanist: "You are convinced that Erasmus does not hold the right views of the Catholic faith and of Holy Scripture because he surrounds himself with such a retinue of words" (CWM 15: 262).

78. CWE, Epp. 980:8, 1033: 215–27.

79. CWE, Ep. 1167: 30–31, 88–92, 106–7.

80. *Peutingers Briefwechesel*, Ep. 206.

81. *Melanchthons Briefwechsel* 1: 184 (to Johann Hess, 1520).

82. To François du Moulin, quoted Herminjard 1: 433, note 8.

83. Scheurl citing Spalatin in a letter to Poemer, *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Ep. 218 (1520); Vadianus, *Vadianische Briefsammlung*, vol. 3: Nachträge, 243.

84. Correspondents of Erasmus and Agrippa of Nettesheim also reported that an unnamed Minorite had labeled Luther together with Lefèvre, Luther, and Erasmus "doctors" of Antichrist or "Antichrists" (Erasmus in Allen, Ep. 1192:34, and Herminjard 1: 72–73).

85. P. Balan, ed. *Monumenta reformationis lutheranae e tabulariis secretioribus s. sedis, 1521–25* (Regensburg, 1884), 31, and P. Kalkoff, ed. and trans., *Die Depeschen des Nuntius Aleander vom Wormser Reichstage, 1521* (Halle, 1886), 29.

86. In March 1521, see P. Kalkoff, *Wolfgang Capito im Dienste Erzbischof Albrechts von Mainz* (Berlin, 1907), Urkundliche Beilagen, 134–35.

87. W. Friedensburg, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 18 (1898): 115.

88. *Adversus cucullatum Minotaurum Wittenbergensem*, ed. J. Schweizer (Münster, 1920), 18, 50.

89. *Commentaria de actis et scriptis Martini Lutheri* (Mainz:Behem, 1549 (repr. Farnborough, 1968), 56.

90. *Epistola Apologetica* (Antwerp, 1530), E ii recto–E iii verso.

91. *Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus*, 531.

92. *Concilium Tridentinum*, ed. S. Merkle (2nd ed., Freiburg im Breisgau, 1964), 3: 252; P. Grendler, "The Concept of the Humanist in Cinquecento Italy," 450.

93. Debora Shuger uses the term "dogmatic humanism" for this deployment of humanistic philology in the service of doctrine. See *The Renaissance Bible: Scholarship, Sacrifice, and Subjectivity* (Berkeley, 1994), 22.

Chapter Two

1. Erasmus at Allen, Ep. 1977:40–41; *Evangelion Martini Luters, welches da lange Zeit underm Bank gelegen* (Freiburg i. B., 1536), quoted by G. Mertz, *Das Schulwesen der deutschen Reformation im 16. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg, 1902), 1.

2. *De transitu Hellenismi ad Christianismum* (Paris, 1535), ed. M. M. de la Garanderie and D. F. Penham (Paris, 1993), 61.

3. CWM 6: 33.

4. F. Eulenburg, *Die Frequenz der deutschen Universitäten von ihrer Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* (Leipzig, 1904) 51–52. See the analysis of these figures in H. de Ridder-Symoens, *History of the Universities in Europe* (Cambridge, 1996) 2: 298–393.

5. Allen, Ep. 1161: 41–42.

6. Allen, Ep. 1973: 12–13.

7. CWE 26: 377.

8. *Der letzte Bundsgenoss* under the heading "Wider das biecher schriebenn in gotlichen sachen" (Against the writing of books in divine matters). Text in L. Enders, *Johann Eberlin von Günzberg. Ausgewählte Schriften* (Halle, 1896), 1: 201. Eberlin did concede, however, that in order to do so, one has to have "a little knowledge of the three languages, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek" (*Johann Eberlin von Günzberg*, 203). He does not explain how this could be achieved without books.

9. ASD 9-1, 344, 396.

10. Allen, Ep. 2615: 427–29.

11. ASD, 9-1, 344.

12. Herminjard 1: 212–13.

13. Pirckheimer, *Opera*, 314–17.

14. See p. 77.

15. *Amerbachkorrespondenz*, 3, Epp. 1012 (1524); 1220 (1527); 1009 (1525); 1141 (1526); Anhang, Ep. 2.

16. For details see pp. 97–101.

17. Allen, Ep. 1930. A list of topics jotted down at the end of the draft (see Allen's headnote to the letter) indicates that he wanted to speak about *nostra schola*, that is, the school Melanchthon had instituted in Nürnberg in 1526.

18. Allen, Epp. 1893:37–38; 1977:42; for the text of Pirckheimer's letter to Tscherrte see H. Rupprich, *Albrecht Dürer:Schriftlicher Nachlass* (Berlin, 1956), 285.

19. W. Friedensburg, "Beiträge zum Briefwechsel der katholischen Gelehrten Deutschlands im Reformationszeitalter," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 19 (1899): 256.

20. Johann Lang, one of the most active champions of the Reformation on the faculty, left his religious order and thus disqualified himself from teaching at the university. He eventually ended up as superintendent of the Protestant clergy in Erfurt. The city council supported the Reformation and in 1524 declared its independence from the bishopric in Mainz in a coup d'etat. A year later, however, the council members retreated from their radical stance, compromised with Mainz, and instituted a policy of dual confessions. Lang's preaching had been instrumental in the reformation of the city, and it was he in particular who was accused by the university of disparaging the humanities. See P. Blickle, "Die Reformation in Stadt und Landschaft Erfurt: Ein paradigmatischer Fall," in *Erfurt: Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. U. Weiss (Weimar, 1995), 253–73.

21. E. Kleineidam, *Universitas Studii Erffordensis* (Leipzig, 1969), 2: 27.

22. *Acten der Erfurter Universität*, ed. H. Weissenborn (Halle, 1884), 2: 324–39.

23. *Helii Eobani Hessi . . . et amicorum ipsius epistolarum familiarium libri XII* (Marburg, 1543). The letter dates from 1523.

24. Lang, in turn, defended himself in a letter to Martin von der Marthen, rector of the Erfurt gymnasium. See note 42.

25. *Dialogi tres* (Erfurt: Maler, 1524). For Eobanus' further career see note 20.

26. *Dialogi tres*, Bi recto.

27. *Dialogi tres*, B iv recto-verso.

28. *Dialogi tres*, C i recto-verso.

29. *Dialogi tres*, C ii recto.

30. *Eobanus Hessus, Literarum libri*, 294.

31. *Dialogi tres*, C iv verso, D i recto

32. *Dialogi tres*, D i recto.

33. WA 7: 777; 8: 412, 549. This prompted H. Grisar to comment that "the violence of the tone in which Luther speaks of the universities . . . has perhaps never been equalled in any attack on these institutions" (*Luther* [London, 1917], 6: 24, note 3); compare Melanchthon's remark that the universities were "an invention of the Devil" (CR 1: 345).

34. R. Vorbaum, *Evangelische Schulordnungen* (Gütersloh, 1858), 1: 2.

35. Quoted by J. Döllinger, *Die Reformation, ihre innere Entwicklung und ihre Wirkungen im Umfange des Lutherischen Bekenntnisses* (Regensburg, 1848), 1: 473, note 96.

36. Urbanus Rhegius, *Formulae quaedam caute loquendi* in *Opera . . . Latine edita* (Nürnberg, 1562), 77 verso.

37. Dedicatory letter to Latin translation of Jesus Sirach, to Count of Anhalt, quoted by G. Mertz, *Das Schulwesen der deutschen Reformation* (Heidelberg, 1902), 4.

38. CR 1: 594 (1522); on Karlstadt see CR 2: 727; 2: 31.

39. Quoted Mertz, p. 9

40. The poem is entitled *Ecclesiae afflictae epistola ad Lutherum* (A letter from the afflicted church to Luther). Eobanus published it together with Luther's reply in *De non contemnendis studiis humanioribus* (Erfurt, 1523), B iii recto, compare A ii verso; B iii recto.

41. WA Br 3:50 (March 1523).

42. *Joannis Langi . . . epistola ad Excellentissimum D. Martinum Margaritanum* (Erfurt, 1521), A iii recto, B i recto-verso. The letter was published by Eobanus Hessus, seemingly without authorization; see E. Rummel, "Professional Friendships among humanists: Collaboration or Conspiracy?" in J. Mehl ed. *In Laudem Caroli: Renaissance and Reformation Studies for Charles G. Nauert* (Kirksville, 1998) 35–44. Sebastian Castellio (see pp. 67–72) complained of similar misrepresentations: "[Beza] writes that I am of the opinion that Christians ought to read only the Bible. He is wrong, for I myself (and I am a Christian, am I not?) read much besides the Bible . . . but the rest of the disciplines, compared to biblical studies, are of small value in my opinion and must be subservient to them" (*Defensio*, 31).

43. *Joachimi Camerarii . . . epistolarum familiarium libri VI* (Frankfurt: Wechel, 1583), 380. The inaugural speech he gave at the University of Leipzig in 1541 (*Oratio de studio bonarum literarum*, Leipzig, 1542) bears out his commitment to humanism. In it he praises "the dignity and excellence of the best of letters, arts, and disciplines, of that learning and erudition which constitutes humanity itself, which prepares the mind for excellence and recognition, which we believe can perfect a good natural potential." Without liberal education, "no one can become a good citizen or deserve the name of a free man" (A5 recto). And yet the value of the humanities was not universally recognized. "There are very few people who believe that our studies are of excellent use in life and not just an adornment or an honour" (A6 recto).

44. *Melanchthons Briefwechsel* 1: 481; 516; 2: 273; *Melanchthons Werke*, ed. R. Stupperich (Gütersloh, 1961), 3: 65, 93.

45. Cochlaeus had been active as an educator in Nürnberg. On the recommendation of Pirckheimer, then a member of the city council, he had been appointed rector of one of the

city's Latin schools, a post he held until 1515, when he departed for Italy as tutor of Pirckheimer's nephews. He obtained a doctorate in theology at Ferrara, was ordained priest, and on his return to Germany became a vocal, indeed violent, critic of Luther.

46. *Commentaria de actis et scriptis Martini Lutheri* (Mainz, 1549, repr. Farnborough, 1968), 101.

47. WA Br 1: 170.

48. *Melanchthons Briefwechsel* 1: 82 (1518).

49. *Melanchthons Werke* 3: 26, 33, 59.

50. *Beatus Rhenanus Briefwechsel*, 348–49. The statement was to a certain extent a public relations exercise. When Bucer defended his stand on education and expressed surprise at Erasmus' criticism, he conveniently forgot the attack he had made on the humanist in 1524 in a letter to Luther. There he betrayed his misgivings about humanistic studies, exclaiming: "To perdition with the beauty of the Latin language, to perdition with the wonder of learning, if they obscure Christ's glory" (Bucer, *Correspondance*, 1: 296).

51. Capito to Bugenhagen, *Dr. Johannes Bugenhagens Briefwechsel*, ed. O. Vogt (Stettin, 1888), 34 (1525).

52. Text translated in L. Spitz and B. Sher Tinsley, eds., *Johann Sturm on Education: The Reformation and Humanist Learning* (St. Louis, 1955), 105, 312. However, Sturm's frequent run-ins with church authorities over the direction humanistic education should take played into the hands of humanist critics and supported their contention that the reformers were half-hearted supporters at best.

In Calvin's Geneva the Academy likewise experienced conflicts reflecting different conceptions of its purpose, but it was never allowed to become merely a confessional training center. Secular studies were scorned by some as "profane" but, as Beza stated in his speech inaugurating the Academy, "if one considers the author of these subjects, the almighty and most-merciful God, or their legitimate use, there is nothing in these subjects that is not pure and correct." In the Laws of the Academy, he noted that previously students had to seek a liberal education elsewhere, but now they had the good fortune of having "the same city as mother of learning and of faith." See K. Maag, *Seminary or University? The Geneva Academy and Reformed Education, 1560–1620* (Brookfield, 1995), 15, 17.

53. *Vadianische Briefsammlung*, Ep. 573 (1529).

54. *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 4: Ep. 1713 (1533).

55. *Canonici indocti Lutherani*, published anonymously and without date in Wittenberg. The quotations in this paragraph are on A iii verso- A iv verso.

56. He repeats this explanation in the sermon addressed to parents: "[They reason that] because there is no hope of becoming monks, nuns, or priests, as was the case until now, one doesn't need learned people or much studying. Instead one should aim to make a living and become rich" (*Ausgewählte Werke*, ed. H. H. Borcherdt and Georg Merz (Munich, 1952), 5: 83–84, 265).

57. *Melanchthons Werke* 3: 65; CR 1: 666 (1524).

58. *Vadianische Briefsammlung*, Ep. 573 (1529).

59. *The Lost Art of Speaking*, in *Johann Sturm on Education*, trans. Spitz and Tinsley, 129.

60. *Epistolae*, e ii recto. The quotation comes from an apologia, entitled *Expostulatio de gravissima iniuria hostis Ionas*, which is added to the letters (signatures a–t follow signatures A–Z and Aa–Zz).

61. *An die Ratsherrn* (*Ausgewählte Werke* 5: 87); *Predigt* (*Ausgewählte Werke*, 5: 284).

62. *Predigt*, *Ausgewählte Werke*, 5: 284.

63. R. Vorbaum, *Evangelische Schulordnungen* (Gütersloh, 1858), 1: 108.

64. See Otto Brunfels' instructions to the prefects of the school in Strasbourg (1529): "Concerning authors: Since a solid education cannot be provided except from the best au-

thors . . . we should always have some writings of these authors at hand: Cicero, Quintilian, Sallust, Vergil, Horace, Terence; and of the recent authors: all the writings of Erasmus and Philip [Melanchthon] . . . our Greek sources are: the grammar of Philip, Lucian, Homer, Hesiod, the Sententiae Stobeanae, Cato, Socrates' *Paraenesis*, the New Testament." Similarly, Johann Sturm on the organization of the Academy of Strasbourg in 1567: the aims of education cannot be achieved "unless the right, authentic authors are used as sources, namely: the Bible, Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Cicero, Demosthenes, Euripides, Sophocles, Plautus, Terence, Caesar, Sallust, Thucydides, Plutarch, and other classical authors" (*Les statuts et privilèges des Universités françaises depuis leur fondation jusqu'en 1789*, ed. M. Fournier and C. Engel, Paris, 1894, 4: 8, 110).

65. ASD 9-1, 344. See J. Kittelson, "Luther the Educational Reformer," in *Luther and Learning*, ed. M. Harran (London, 1985), 95–114; he notes that "the fruits [of humanistic learning] were not *scientia* or knowledge, but *sapientia* or wisdom" (97).

66. Bugenhagen played an important role in drawing up school ordinances. He was involved in the foundation or reformation of schools in a number of cities in northern Germany (Brunswick, Hamburg, Lübeck, Bremen) and in close contact with King Christian III of Denmark. The ordinances he drew up are typical in the concrete educational goals envisaged. See H. Hering, ed., *Johann Bugenhagen: Gestalt und Wirkung. Beiträge zur Bugenhagenforschung aus Anlass des 500. Geburtstags* (Berlin, 1984).

67. Vorbaum 1: 178, 11, 55. See also the Protestant historian Johannes Sleidan in his *De statu religionis et rei publicae* (I used the edition of 1557, n.l.: P. J. Planus and A. Rebulus): "[T]he times are such that we must give foremost thought to supporting youth, that churches and states may in future have at their disposal suitable men" (199 verso). Similarly, he recorded the response of the papal legates to Protestant demands at the Colloquy of Ratisbon of 1541: "An effort must be made to educate youth in the languages and in liberal arts. In this matter the Protestants would spare no effort, for they were determined to have in their gymnasia teachers who were outstanding scholars. Their purpose was to attract a great many young people, especially young noblemen who would take in religious notions together with letters and, corrupted themselves, harm others by infecting them through contagion. It was therefore necessary to institute schools and attract with decent pay men who were learned and of orthodox religious views" (215 verso). See A. G. Dickens, *The Reformation in Historical Thought* (Oxford, 1985), 10–19.

68. *An die Ratsherrn* (*Ausgewählte Werke* 5: 99).

69. Vorbaum 1: 69.

70. *Predigt* (*Ausgewählte Werke* 5: 275, 290). Brunfels' preface to his *Catechesis puerorum* (Frankfurt, 1529) contains some of the same pedagogical views. Citing Cicero, he notes that parents educate their children "not only for themselves but for their fatherland, not merely for their own delight but that they may be useful to the state." This was a message, he said, that deserved to be inscribed in golden letters above the doors of Christians. He offered the familiar combination of incentives in a bid to encourage the promotion of learning. To educate children was God's command, and parents were responsible for the outcome like the steward in the parable for the talent entrusted him by the master. Education would provide parents with the assurance that their children would turn out good citizens, not "beasts and dumb animals." Salvation would be their reward: You will obtain, beyond immortal glory, that crown of justice which the Lord will on the judgment day give to all who have advanced his glory" (A2 recto–A4 recto).

Although perhaps in less specific ways, humanist manuals likewise point to the usefulness of education in producing good citizens. Education, as Vergerio puts it, is "a matter of more than private interest; it concerns the state," because it determines the quality of governors and administrators. See W. H. Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre and Other Human-*

ist Educators (repr. Toronto, 1996), 99. The message that education has a civic dimension is also contained in Vergerio's approval of Aristotle's view that a man should not abandon himself completely to the attractions of literature and philosophical speculation and thus be "useless" to the state, a reproach that is however restricted to those born to rule (Woodward, 110).

71. *An die Ratsherrn* (*Ausgewählte Werke* 5: 92, 94–95).

72. Herminjard 1: 39 (to Bugenhagen), 241.

73. Herminjard 1: 254.

74. The Strasbourg educator Johann Sturm is a rare exception. His ecumenical approach to education sets him apart from the rest. While most authorities (reformed as well as Catholic) required strict adherence to their religious doctrine, Sturm appeared to place education above religious divisions. In a letter to Duke Albert of Prussia (1565), he wrote that the standard of learning among "papists" pleased him and that congratulations were in order to the Catholic authorities who had supported the institution of Jesuit colleges in Augsburg, Mainz, and Trier (Spitz-Tinsley, 258). He similarly praised the educational achievements of the Jesuits in a letter to the scholarchs of Strasbourg. "If it were necessary to praise [religious orders], this order would deserve praise," he wrote. In an extraordinary gesture of collegiality, he expressed his pleasure in the educational activities of Catholic orders because "they cultivate literary studies, the object of all our labour and our great passion. In fact, I have seen the authors they read, the exercises they do, and their method of teaching is so close to our own that it would appear to be derived from ours" (Sturm, ed. Spitz and Tinsley, 261).

75. Allen, Ep. 61:128.

76. Enea Piccolomini, *Opera inedita* (repr. Farnborough, 1968), 989; Luther *Predigt* (*Ausgewählte Werke* 5: 284).

77. CWE 26: 304; Allen, Ep. 1554:43–45.

78. See G. Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning: Indoctrination of the Young in the German Reformation* (Baltimore, 1978), 52. See his summary of "The Pedagogical Tradition," pp. 48–70.

79. Quoted by Strauss, 37–38. Strauss notes that Luther's remarks on education were "remarkably unsystematic if not self-contradictory. While affirming the feasibility of traditional teaching in the proved ways of the arts curriculum, and while holding the child's parents accountable for basic instruction in religious knowledge, Luther seemed also to deny the possibility of effecting by means of human effort any lasting change in the inclination of men" (Strauss, 33).

80. Bugenhagen in the school order of Brunswick (of 1528; Vorbaum 1: 9). Hegendorf in his *Christiana Studiosae iuventutis institutio* (I used the edition Paris:Stephanus 1527), 2 verso.

81. Text in *Operum poeticorum Nicodemi Frischlini pars scenica* (Strasbourg, 1596). For a full examination of Frischlin's and Gretser's plays and their confessionally colored message see B. Bauer, *Jesuitische 'ars rhetorica' im Zeitalter der Glaubenskämpfe* (Munich, 1986), 1–15.

82. Text ed. A. Dürrwächter in *Programm zum Jahresbericht über das Königliche Alte Gymnasium zu Regensburg 1897* (Regensburg, 1898). For a summary of the Catholic educational program in Reformation Germany and relevant literature see most recently H. Dickerhof, "Die katholische Gelehrtenschule des konfessionellen Zeitalters im Heiligen Römischen Reich," in W. Reinhard and H. Schilling, eds., *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung* (Gütersloh, 1995), 348–70.

83. The sequel, *De humanitatis regno comoedia altera*, was performed in 1590, text ed. A. Dürrwächter in *Jakob Gretser und seine Dramen* (Freiburg i. Br., 1912).

84. See the oath required by Calvin in Geneva: "I affirm that I follow and hold as true the Doctrine of faith such as it is contained in the Catechism of this Church and to submit

also to the Discipline therein established . . ." (quoted p. 83 in R. Stauffer, "Calvinism and the Universities," in *University and Reformation: Lectures from the University of Copenhagen Symposium*, ed. L. Grane [Leiden, 1981], 76–98).

85. *Les statuts*, ed. Fournier and Engel, 4: 46; *Bugenhagen. Briefwechsel*, 546, written in 1553.

86. Reimann quoted by Döllinger 1: 545, note 225; Roding in *Contra impias scholas Jesuitarum* (Heidelberg, 1575), 29.

87. Literally "not to say, periods of five years (*lustra*)" in W. Friedensburg, ed., *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 18 (1898): 265.

88. *Conciliorum oecumenicorum decreta*, ed. J. Alberigo et al. (3rd ed., Bologna, 1973), 668–69.

89. B. Reichert, ed., *Acta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum (1558-1628)*, in *Monumenta Ordinum Praedicatorum* (Rome, 1901), 10: 7.

90. Quoted H. Engelbrecht, *Geschichte des österreichischen Bildungswesens* (Vienna, 1983), 2: 12; see also the curriculum plans on pp. 323–33.

Chapter Three

1. Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York, 1955), 10.

2. On skepticism in the Renaissance see C. B. Schmitt, "The Rediscovery of Ancient Skepticism," in *The Skeptical Tradition*, ed. M. Burnyeat (Berkeley, 1983), 225–51; V. Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism* (Ithaca, 1985); L. Jardine, "Humanist Logic," and R. H. Popkin, "Theories of Knowledge," in *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, ed. Schmitt and Q. Skinner (Cambridge, 1990), 173–98 and 678–84; Popkin, *The History of Skepticism from Erasmus to Descartes* (rev. edition, Assen 1964), esp. chap. 2: "The Revival of Greek Skepticism in the Sixteenth Century"; Schmitt, *Cicero Skepticus* (The Hague, 1972), esp. 54–63; A. Verdan, *Le Skepticisme philosophique* (Paris, 1971), esp. 74–83; D. Kelley, *Renaissance Humanism* (Boston, 1991), chap. 3: "Humanism and Philosophy," J. A. Fernández-Santamaría, *The Theater of Man: J. L. Vives on Society* (Philadelphia, 1998), chap. 2: "God's First Provision."

3. Ficino in the preface of *De voluptate* (*Opera omnia*, repr. Turin 1962), 1: 986; Martin Schoock in *De skepticismo . . . libri quatuor quibus qua antiquorum, qua recentiorum skepticorum deliria ex suis principiis solide discutiuntur atque certitudo non minus disciplinarum universalium, quam philosophiae theoreticae asseritur* (Groningen, 1652), 71. He called the philosophy unworthy of a Christian because it shook the foundations of theology (72) and was bound to lead to atheism: "Hence arises skepticism in theology, which ends in atheism. For he who doubts everything, ends up believing in nothing" (442).

4. Text in *Disputationes contra Lutherum*, ed. F. Pijper (The Hague, 1905), 43–84. The following quotations appear on pp. 81–82. Masson wrote the dialogue in response to an inaugural lecture delivered by Petrus Mosellanus at the University of Leipzig, but he meant to attack humanism rather than any individual humanist, as can be seen from the fact that Erasmus responded in a published apologia.

5. See V. Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism*, chap. 3, on skepticism in the writings of Quattrocento humanists; also L. Jardine in Burnyeat, *The Skeptical Tradition*, 253–86, esp. 258, 265.

6. In the dedicatory letter to his commentary on Genesis (1554), CO 15, 200: "To these disciples of Socrates . . . nothing is a more plausible axiom than that faith is free, so that one may have doubts about anything in Scripture and render it as flexible as a wax nose, as the saying goes. . . . They are taken in by the blandishments of that New Academy."

7. Quoted by M. Lienhard, "Exposé introductif," in Lienhard, ed., *Croyants et sceptiques au XVIe siècle* (Strasbourg, 1981), 25.

8. W. Bellardi, "Anton Engelbrecht (1485–1558): Helfer, Mitarbeiter und Gegner Bucers," *ARG* 64 (1973): 191. On the meaning of the terms "atheist" and "Epicurean" see L. Febvre's classic *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle* (Paris, 1968); J. Wirth, "'Libertins' et 'Epicuriens': Aspects de l'irréligion au XVIe siècle," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et de la Renaissance* 39 (1977): 601–26; Lienhard, "Exposé introductif," 17–43.

9. C. Robinson, *Lucian and His Influence in Europe* (London, 1979); see also E. Mattioli, *Luciano e l'Umanesimo* (Naples, 1980).

10. For a discussion of humanist uses of Lucian and recent literature on the subject see E. Rummel, *The Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, 24–27.

11. The first quotation comes from an autograph note on a copy of Erasmus' edition of Terence in the Nürnberg Stadtbibliothek (see WA Br 6: 566); for the second quotation see Luther's letter to Linck, WA Br 5: 28.

12. *Enarrationes evangeliorum* . . . (Paris, 1533), 285 verso; sim. *Paradoxa seu Theologicae Assertiones* (Paris, 1534), 41 verso.

13. See E. Rummel, *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics* 1: 147, 152; 2: 101, 161; Juan Sepúlveda criticized Erasmus for his familiarity with the Greek author in *Antapologia* (Rome, 1532), B iv verso.

14. See p. 53.

15. Robinson 83; see Popkin, 51.

16. "Skeptics, atheists, impious men, and revolutionaries"—the phrasing of the Groningen professor Cyriacus Lentz, quoted in P. Dibon, "Skepticisme et orthodoxie reformée dans la Hollande du Siècle d'Or," in *Skepticism from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment*, ed. Popkin and C. Schmitt (Wiesbaden, 1987), 58.

17. *De skepticismo*, 71.

18. Salutati, *Epistolario* 4: 603; Erasmus in his introduction to a translation of Lucian's *Cock*, cited by Robinson, 167.

19. Quoted in A. Verdan, *Le skepticisme philosophique* (Paris, 1971), 74–75.

20. Quoted by Febvre, 57–58. T. Penelhum, "Skepticism and Fideism," in Burnyeat, *The Skeptical Tradition*, 287–317, speaks of the skepticism of Montaigne and his "fideist imitators" (295).

21. He referred to Castellio's supporters in terms reminiscent of Masson's description of biblical humanists. "Recently one of your party showed such care for the Bible," he scoffed, "that it no longer speaks a barbarous language but pure Latin" (*De haereticis a civili magistratu puniendis*, Paris, 1554; facs. Frankfurt, 1973, 64).

22. *Les statuts*, ed. Fournier and Engel, 4: 46.

23. This section elaborates on my paper "Humanism and the Reformation: Was the Conflict between Erasmus and Luther Paradigmatic?" in F. Akkerman et al., eds., *Northern Humanism in European Context, 1469–1625* (Leiden, 1999), 186–97.

24. *Epistola apologetica* . . . *pro opere Collationum* (Antwerp, 1530), Ei verso–Eii recto: *solemne receptumque est hac nostra aetate homines istiusmodi studiis navantes operam Erasmicos appellari (quo te videantur habere suorum studiorum vel ducem vel Maecenatem, vel instauratorem)*.

25. Allen, Ep. 373:131–34.

26. It is certain that Erasmus' doctorate was not recognized by Noël Beda, a leading theologian at Paris. It was a sore point with Erasmus that Beda had denied him the title of *syntheologus*, fellow theologian. One of the few occasions on which Erasmus did mention his doctorate prompted a sarcastic reply from another Paris doctor, Pierre Cousturier, who remarked on "the pseudo-university that conferred a decree on such a pseudo-theologian." Eras-

mus remained sensitive to comments on his academic qualifications and complained—with some justification—that assessments of his expertise were inconsistent, depending on the writer's agenda: "When the merits of theologians are being discussed, Erasmus is dismissed as a dullard; but when someone wants to damage his reputation, then it is he and he alone who could have put out this whole [Lutheran] conflagration, if he had chosen to lift his pen" (CWE, Ep. 1576: 41–45).

27. LB 6: *** 1 recto, *** 3 verso. It is instructive to compare his cautious remarks in the prefatory pieces to the New Testament with Oecolampadius' postscript to the work. His comments are less finely nuanced than Erasmus'. He, too, remarks on the philological side of the task, praising Erasmus' skills as a textual critic and translator, but he does not disguise the theological import of the edition. Although he hails Erasmus as a humanist, calling him "the adornment and darling of all letters" (*literarum omnium decus ac delitiae*), he ends by designating him a "true theologian" (*Oecolampads Briefwechsel*, 27).

28. Allen, Ep. 1522: 20, sim. 1514: 13.

29. Allen, Epp. 1634:91–96; 1753: 19–27. The literature on Erasmus' conflict with Luther is extensive. For recent treatments, see M. O'Rourke-Boyle, *Rhetoric and Reform: Erasmus' Civil Dispute with Luther* (Cambridge, Mass., 1983); V. Kahn, *Rhetoric, Prudence, and Skepticism*, chap. 4: "Erasmus: Prudence and Faith"; G. Remer, *Humanism and the Rhetoric of Toleration* (University Park, 1996), chap. 1 "Erasmus: The Paradigm of Humanist Toleration," and the literature cited there.

30. Allen, Ep. 1496: 167–83.

31. Modern scholars have taken note that Erasmus' disputation illustrates the decision-making process and is a methodological showcase. For recent discussions and literature see C. Augustijn, *Erasmus: der Humanist als Theologe und Kirchenreformer* (Leiden, 1996), 245–324; M. O'Rourke-Boyle, *Rhetoric and Reform*, 122–31.

32. Other attempts will be discussed in chapter 6 in the context of examining the concept of "accommodation."

33. See LB 9: 1251C, 1242A.

34. LB 9: 1215D.

35. LB 9: 1091C, ASD 9-1: 258.

36. Erasmus praised Luther's moral integrity, his gospel spirit, and, as late as 1519, his willingness "to submit himself to the judgment of the Apostolic See and entrust himself to the judgment of the universities" (CWE, Ep. 1033: 127–28). Later he admitted that he and others had been mistaken in their opinion of Luther, "for we readily believe what we strongly wish to be true; and people thought a man had arisen who was unspotted by all this world's desires and would be able to apply some remedy to these great evils." Instead Luther had poured forth an un-Christian torrent of abuse and was rupturing the unity of the church (CWE, Ep. 1202: 202–10).

37. For recent discussions see A. G. Dickens, *Erasmus the Reformer* (London, 1994), esp. 115–47; C. Augustijn, *Erasmus: His Life, Works, and Influence* (Toronto, 1991), chap. 10: "The Luther Question," 119–33; H. M. Pabel, "The Peaceful People of Christ: The Irenic Ecclesiology of Erasmus of Rotterdam," in *Erasmus' Vision of the Church*, ed. H. M. Pabel (Kirksville, 1996), 57–94. Luther himself briefly considered the explanation that Erasmus was more peace-loving than he, but concluded sarcastically: "I assume (as I am in courtesy bound) that it is your charity and love of peace that prompts such sentiments . . . but I must not allow you to hold such mistaken ideas. To take no pleasure in assertions is not the mark of a Christian heart" (WA 18: 603).

38. See note 6.

39. *The Bondage of the Will*, in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, trans. E. Gordon Rupp (Philadelphia, 1969), 106–8.

40. LB 10: 1258B–1262B.

41. LB 5: 1171F–72A.

42. ASD 9-1: 418; CWE, Ep. 1644:15–17.

43. LB 10: 1268E.

44. ASD 9-1: 419, 330.

45. V. Beltran de Heredia, ed., "Controversias en torno a Erasmo de Rotterdam," *Cartulario de la Universidad de Salamanca* (Salamanca, 1973), 6: 32.

46. *Oecolampads Briefwechsel*, 434.

47. Wengert, *Human Freedom, Christian Righteousness*, 82–106. The quotations from Melanchthon appear on p. 76.

48. WA 18, 605:27, WA Br 7: 30–38; In conversation with friends and followers Luther reiterated his judgment of Erasmus as "Epicurean" and a doubter. For examples, see *Luther's Works*, ed. Tappert (Philadelphia, 1967), 54 (Table Talk), 352 (1532): "Clever people are interested in them [religious matters], reflect upon them, and weigh them according to reason. Such a man is Erasmus. Other very clever men support this Epicurean"; #466 (1533): "Erasmus sticks to his own affairs, that is, to heathen business. He doesn't care about ours, that is, theological affairs. . . . He persecutes our cause with choice scurrility and in doing so employs words and ideas which would not occur to a stupid fool, though they are carefully thought out. In defending his own cause, however, he shows his true colors, otherwise he wouldn't always be shielding Epicurus." As noted by the editor, Luther cites Epicurus in the sense of "Skeptic" in both passages.

49. *Responsio*, 27 recto, 98 verso.

50. *Adversus Erasmi librum de sarcienda ecclesiae concordia*, in *Opera*, 173 recto, 175 recto.

51. *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 2: 498–99; 3: 143.

52. Allen, Ep. 1525:18–20; see Laski in *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 3: 175, who praises Erasmus' modesty and criticizes Luther's imprudence.

53. *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 3: 136, 139, 144, of 1526.

54. On the genesis and publication of the book see M. Van der Poel, *Cornelius Agrippa: The Humanist Theologian and His Declamations* (Leiden, 1997), 116–120. On Agrippa and his work in general, see C. Nauert, *Agrippa and the Crisis of Renaissance Thought* (Urbana, 1965), especially his carefully nuanced assessment, 297–302; I. Backus, "Agrippa on Human Knowledge of God," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 65 (1983): 147–59; P. Zambelli, "Cornelio Agrippa, Erasmo e la teologia umanistica," *Rinascimento* 10 (1970): 29–88; Zambelli, "Agrippa di Nettesheim: 'Dialogus de homine,'" *Rivista critica di storia della filosofia* 13 (1958): 47–71; Zambelli, "Corneille Agrippa, Erasme et la Théologie Humaniste," *Colloquia Erasmiana Turonensia* (Paris, 1972), 2: 113–59; and "Magic and Radical Reformation in Agrippa of Nettesheim," *JWCI* 39 (1976): 69–103.

55. Sig. *5 recto–7 verso in the *Opera* (Lyon, n.d.; facs. Hildesheim, 1970), vol. 2.

56. *Opera*, 2: 153, 656.

57. *Opera*, 2: 35, 39; ethical questions cannot be sorted out using "the petty reasoning of the philosophers"; they are based on "various customs and usages, and can change with time, place, and people's opinion" (118). With respect to external observances, it would have been better to permit variants and preserve peace in the Church. "The Roman pontiffs could have avoided many evils and kept the Church peaceful and unified, if they had tolerated . . . the Bohemian's [use of the] chalice" (144).

58. *Opera*, 2: 6 (also 299).

59. *Opera*, 2: 311, 313. He hammers home the message of fideism in *De triplici ratione cognoscendi Dei*, *Opera*, 2: "The gospel cannot be correctly understood without divine grace. . . . our intellect, if it is not divinely enlightened, is not immune from error and labors in vain

over divine matters"(466; see 467); "faith is the only instrument and medium through which we can recognize God" (468).

60. *Oratio . . . de potestate et sapientia Dei* in *Opera* 2: 1100. He was paraphrasing Ficino (see note 3). For the verdict of contemporaries, see Schoock, *De skepticismo*, 69–70; for a summary of verdicts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, see M. van der Poel (above, note 54), 160–66. For modern criticism see the editor's postscript to the German translation, *Über die Fragwürdigkeit, ja Nichtigkeit der Wissenschaften*, ed. S. Wollgast, trans. G. Güpner (Berlin, 1993), 294–95.

61. *Apologia*, Dii recto, *Opera* 2: 475.

62. *Opera* 2: 553.

63. *Opera*, 2: 34.

64. *Apologia*, C vii recto–verso.

65. *Apologia*, E iv recto.

66. *Opera* 2: 287.

67. *Apologia*, C iii recto.

68. *Apologia*, C vii verso.

69. *Apologia*, C i verso.

70. CWE 71: 91–92.

71. Allen, Ep. 2796:5–9, 13–22.

72. *Apologia*, D v verso; sim. C i verso; *Querela*, in *Opera* 2: 454.

73. LB 9: 922 D–E; C. Duplessis D'Argentré *Collectio judiciorum de novis erroribus* (Paris, 1728–36, repr. Brussels, 1963), 2: 85. For an incisive analysis of the relationship between Erasmus and Agrippa see B. Bowen, "Cornelius Agrippa's *De vanitate*: Polemic or Paradox?" *BHR* 34 (1972) 249–56.

74. As far as we know, Agrippa remained Catholic, but his last years are not well documented. In 1532 he wrote to Melanchthon, speaking of Luther with admiration as "that undefeated heretic, who as Paul says in Acts, serves God according to the sect which they call heresy" (quoted Zambelli in *Colloquia Erasmiana*, 140); that same year he wrote to Erasmus (Allen, Ep. 2589: 16–18) that he "held no opinions that diverge from the opinions of the Catholic church." For a biographical sketch of his last years, see Van der Poel, 46–49.

75. On Castellio see J. Maehly, *Sebastian Castellio. Ein biographischer Versuch nach den Quellen* (1862; repr. Geneva, 1971); H. Guggisberg, *Sebastian Castellio, 1515–1563: Humanist und Verteidiger der Toleranz im konfessionellen Zeitalter* (Göttingen, 1997); B. Becker, ed., *Autour de Michel Servet et de Sebastien Castellion* (Haarlem, 1953) (esp. J. Lindeboom, "La place de Castellion dans l'histoire de l'ésprit," 158–80; E. Feist Hirsch, "Castellio's *De Arte Dubitandi* and the Problem of Religious Liberty," 244–58; S. van der Woude, "Censured Passages from Castellio's *Defensio suarum translationum*," 259–79; and B. Becker, "Sur quelques documents manuscrits concernant Castellion," 280–302); H. Guggisberg, "Sebastian Castellio and the German Reformation," in *Die Reformation in Deutschland und Europa: Interpretationen und Debatten*, ed. Guggisberg and G. Krodel (Gütersloh, 1993), 325–43; H. Liebing, "Die Schriftauslegung des S. Castellio," in *Humanismus, Reformation, Konfession: Beiträge zur Kirchengeschichte*, ed. W. Bienert and W. Hage (Marburg, 1986), esp. 40–78; B. Bauer, "Die Wahrheit wird euch frei machen—Die Wahrheit geht im Streit verloren. Formen des Streitens um den wahren Glauben bei Erasmus, Luther, Melanchthon und Castellio," in R. Friedrich and K. A. Vogel, eds., *500 Jahre Philipp Melanchthon (1497–1560)* (Wiesbaden, 1998), 72–122.

76. *De calumnia*, text in *Dialogi IIII* (Arensdorf, 1576). The quotation is on p. 113. In the *Defensio ad authorem libri cui titulus est Calumniae Nebulensis* (text in *Dialogi IIII*) he quotes (p. 19) the reference Calvin had provided for him.

77. *Defensio*, 29, 33; *De calumnia*, 117.

78. *De arte dubitandi*, ed. E. Feist Hirsch (Leiden, 1981), 181. All quotations from *De arte dubitandi* follow this edition.

79. Preface to his Latin translation of the Bible, addressed to King Edward VI in 1551. I used the Leipzig, 1750 edition, where the quote can be found on *3 recto.

80. *De arte dubitandi*, 181.

81. *De haereticis, an sint persequendi* (1554), trans. R. Bainton in *Records of Civilization* (New York, 1965), 24: 218.

82. Extracts from the work were first published in Gouda (1613) and by J. Wetstein in his *Novum Testamentum Graecum* (1752). The complete edition was published only in the twentieth century. On the publication history see the preface to the text, Feist Hirsch, ix–xii, and Guggisberg, 247–48.

83. According to Popkin's estimate (*The History of Skepticism*, 11), "Castellio's theory is hardly as skeptical as Erasmus's and certainly does not attain the level of complete doubt of Montaigne's."

84. *De arte dubitandi*, 14, 15, 35.

85. *De arte dubitandi*, 40–41.

86. *De arte dubitandi*, 44, 49, 59.

87. He argues: "In future life, impious people, whose senses and intellect will certainly not be regenerated through the rebirth of Christ and through the spirit, whom they lack, will yet not lack intellect; indeed they will be tormented because they will realize that they have sinned and repudiated the truth. They will know it and be conscious of it. Therefore I assert that human senses and intellect were not vitiated by Adam's sin" (*De arte dubitandi*, 70). The preceding quotations are on pp. 59–60, 64, 66–67.

88. *De arte dubitandi*, 84, 88.

89. *De calumnia*, 123; Preface to Bible (ed. 1750), *2 verso; *Contra libellum Calvini*, paragraph 28 (B 6 verso–B 7 recto). For an analysis of the latter work, see Guggisberg, 116–22.

90. *De calumnia*, 122.

91. *Defensio*, 42–43.

92. *De calumnia*, 119.

93. *De arte dubitandi*, 88–89.

94. *Defensio*, 29–30.

95. *De calumnia*, 105.

96. [Paris] 1554 (facsm. Frankfurt 1973), 65–67.

97. See Castellio's defense against these labels in his letter to the city council, text in J. Maehly, *Sebastian Castellio* (Basel 1862; repr. Geneva 1971), 104–9. The quotations are on p. 106.

98. He did not, however, use the formulaic "by faith alone" or "by grace alone."

99. *Defensio suarum translationum Bibliorum*, Basel 1562, 21, 49. See S. van der Woude, "Censured Passages." (see note 75).

100. *Mysticism and Dissent* (New Haven, 1973). The introductory chapter is entitled "Mystical Theology as Dissent Ideology." See chap. 7, which is devoted to Castellio.

101. *Opera Omnia*, ed. E. Garin (Turin, 1972), 853, 1067. As Terence Penelhum noted, skepticism "cannot be equated with a combination of simple religious faith and abstinence from theological disputes" ("Skepticism and Fideism," in Burnyeat, *The Skeptical Tradition*, 293). On the relationship between skepticism and fideism, see also R. Hoopes, "Fideism and Skepticism During the Renaissance: Three Major Witnesses," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 14–4 (1951) 319–47.

102. An interpretation encouraged by the research of J. Delumeau, *Catholicism between Luther and Voltaire: A New View of the Counter-Reformation* (London, 1977), and J. Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1985).

103. *De skepticismo*, 69–70; Erasmus, he said, had been labeled a skeptic, but by malicious critics (*at per calumniam*).

104. See Jean La Placette, *De insanabili romanae ecclesiae skepticismo* (Amsterdam, 1696), who argued that if only the pope was infallible, the remaining fallible Christians would not be able to discern who was pope; and J. A. Turretin, *Pyrrhonismus Pontificius* (Leiden, 1692). As Charles Nauert noted, "fideism could easily employ general skeptical arguments, if these terminated in counsels to follow probability in daily living and so left the way open for an act of faith" (*Agrippa and the Crisis of the Renaissance*, 302).

Chapter Four

1. Georg Witzel, *Epistolarum . . . libri quattuor* (Leipzig, 1537), O ii recto.

2. *Epistolae*, n iv recto–verso, o i recto.

3. Cochlaeus, *Commentaria de actis et scriptis Martini Lutheri*, 115.

4. Eobanus Hessus, *Epistolarum familiarium libri XII* (Marburg, 1543), 82. See 117 (*minime tumultuosus, sed tamen horum tumultuum particeps*, "no revolutionary myself, but nevertheless caught up in these revolutions").

5. *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 3: 528.

6. *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 4: 105, 257 (to his brother Basilius Amerbach, 1534).

7. *Amerbachkorrespondenz*, 4: 477.

8. *Apologia qua respondetur temeritati calumniatorum . . . ad quendam amicum conscripta* (Leipzig, 1531), B iii verso – B iiii recto.

9. Witzel, *Epistolae*, L i recto; A ii recto.

10. Antonius Corvinus in the pseudonymous *Ludus Sylvani Hessi in defectionem Georgii Vvicelii ad papistas* (Wittenberg, 1534), C iv verso, D iii verso.

11. Beatus Rhenanus, *Briefwechsel*, 289, 587.

12. "Because you are afraid of slanderous people, you would rather keep total silence," Lips wrote disapprovingly (A. Horawitz, *Erasmus von Rotterdam und Martinus Lipsius* [Vienna, 1882], 109).

13. Horawitz, *Erasmus und Lipsius*, 78–79, 84–85, 90.

14. *Der Briefwechsel des Mutianus Rufus*, ed. C. Krause (Kassel, 1885), Ep. 287 of 1513, Ep. 644 of 1521.

15. ASD 9-1: 210. "In this general strife and disagreement, can one avoid equivocating?" Erasmus wrote in 1523. The alternative was to remain silent, but this avenue was closed to him. "I wish I had that option! But I am subjected to pressure, entreaties, and impositions. I have to protect myself against invidious accusations" (ASD 9-1: 170).

16. Herminjard 1: Ep. 121, 1524. The move did not bring him the desired peace. Two years later he wrote: "Fearing my adversaries, I hardly have a safe place to put my head, except perhaps at court, from which no one can be more adverse than I . . . for there I could not be safe from the tyranny of the committee members and the theologians who would declare me a heretic" (Herminjard 1: Ep. 185).

17. Horawitz, *Erasmus und Lipsius*, 98 (*ob rem tantillam*).

18. R. Klawiter, *The Polemics of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Ulrich von Hutten* (Notre Dame, 1977), 102 and 94 (adapted).

19. ASD 9-1, 171–72.

20. Allen, 1: 33.

21. Witzel, *Epistolae*, P iv recto–verso.

22. See H. Scheible, "Melanchthon zwischen Luther und Erasmus," in A. Buck, ed., *Renaissance—Reformation: Gegensätze und Gemeinsamkeiten* (Wiesbaden, 1984) 55–180.

23. CR 1: 363, 646.

24. Pirckheimer, *Opera*, ed. M. Goldast (Frankfurt, 1610; repr. 1969), 404; On Leib see M. Fink-Lang, "Kilian Leib (1471–1553)," in *Katholisches Leben und Kirchenreform im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung*, ed. E. Iserloh (Aschendorff, 1988), 48: 88–96.

25. *Christoph Scheurls Briefbuch*, eds. F. von Soden and J. Knaake (Potsdam, 1872) 2: Epp. 202, 146, 192.

26. *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 197, 210, 227 (*sociale foedus*).

27. *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 214, 253 (1536).

28. *Amerbachkorrespondenz* 2: 320, 477.

29. Beatus Rhenanus, *Briefwechsel*, 301.

30. A letter to Bartholomeus Golfibius, 1523, quoted by Döllinger 1: 140, note 11.

31. For a finely nuanced analysis see C. Augustijn, "Humanisten auf dem Scheideweg zwischen Luther und Erasmus," reprinted in *Erasmus, der Humanist*, 154–67.

32. Allen, Ep. 1155:8.

33. *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 153, 155, 160, 162, 175.

34. *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 197, 198, 209.

35. *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 214, 216. A year later he wrote to the same correspondent in the same vein: "This has always been my sole purpose: to oblige everyone, to offend no one"(Ep. 227). Here, too, he agrees with Erasmus, who wrote: "I have never harmed anyone, whether or not he favoured Luther" (Allen, Ep. 1477:28).

36. T. Best, trans. *Eccius Dedolatus: A Reformation Satire* (Lexington, 1971), 36; *Scheurls Briefbuch*, Epp. 213, see Ep. 214.

37. The text of the letter, dated 23 April 1521, is printed in F. Herrmann, *Die evangelische Bewegung zu Mainz im Reformationszeitalter* (Mainz, 1907), 211–12.

38. Allen, Epp. 1290:38ff; 1308:1ff. For the phrase "pious cunning" see note 50.

39. Beatus Rhenanus, *Briefwechsel*, Epp. 242, 245.

40. Allen, Ep. 1342:603–4, to Marcus Laurinus in 1523; ASD 9-1, 190.

41. Klawiter, 225.

42. Allen 1: 52.

43. Allen 1: 29, 36. Twice he uses the word *compescere*, "to quell," to describe the purpose of his polemics (1: 23, 24).

44. Allen 1: 30.

45. LB 9: 1277E–1278 B. On the subject see P. Bietenholz, "'Haushalten mit der Wahrheit': Erasmus im Dilemma der Kompromissbereitschaft," *Basler Zeitschrift für Altertumskunde* 86 (1986): 9–26.

46. Allen, Epp. 1118: 40–41; 1167: 164–66.

47. O. Herding and D. Mertens, eds., *Jakob Wimpfeling: Briefwechsel* (Munich, 1990), vol. 2, Ep. 356 (1520).

48. For his letter to Nautzenus see p. 78.

49. Allen, Ep. 1195: 106–19.

50. Allen, Epp. 1219: 100–101; 1202:56–57, esp. lines 66–121 and 285–86 (containing the phrase "sancta quadam vafricie tempori serviendum"); LB 6: 501E; LB 10: 1660E.

51. See chap. 1.

52. *Bellaria Epistolarum Erasmi Roterodami et Ambrosii Pelargi vicissim missarum* (Cologne: H. Fuchs, 1539).

53. *Bellaria Epistolarum*, B7 verso, D8 recto, C2 verso. Erasmus' defense against criticism of his paraphrases on the New Testament was specious, Pelargus said. He was "pretending to speak in the person of Luke and about matters pertaining to Luke's time," but his words were clearly meant to be applied to his own time (C5 recto).

54. *Bellaria Epistolarum*, D1 recto. In defense of another passage he had made much of the adverb *quidem*, which supposedly qualified the meaning of his words; elsewhere he in-

sisted that a sentence had been conditional rather than assertive; but this was quibbling, Pelargus said. He "feared that this sacred anchor will be of no help to you" (E3 recto).

55. *Bellaria Epistolarum*, E4 verso, E5 recto, E8 verso, F2 recto, F7 recto.

56. *Bellaria Epistolarum*, G6 recto.

57. Alberto Pio, *Responsio accurata et paraenetica* (Paris, 1529), 6 verso; LB 9: 1103D.

58. Ambrosius Catharinus, *Annotationes in excerpta quaedam de commentariis Card. Cajetani* (Paris: S. de Colines 1535), 159.

59. Jacques Masson, *Opera*, 172 recto-verso.

60. Beatus wrote two biographical sketches shortly after Erasmus' death in 1536: one preceded the edition of Origen (1536), the other, addressed to Charles V, was placed at the beginning of the *Opera Omnia* published by the Froben Press in 1540. Both texts are in Allen, volume 1.

61. Allen 1: 70.

62. WA, *Tischreden* 1: 131.

63. Klawiter, 54, 133; Luther, WA Tischreden 4: 4899 (1540). Hutten composed an invective against Erasmus (*Expostulatio*) shortly before his death in 1523. Banned from the Empire for his role in the Pfaffenkrieg, he fled to Basel. There he tried to make contact with Erasmus, who declined to see him, offering specious excuses. The ailing Hutten, he said, could not leave his heated room; he himself could not stand German stoves. In reply Hutten wrote the blunt *Expostulatio*, in which he called Erasmus' explanation a "fabrication, no, a lie" (Klawiter, 59). In a subsequent exchange of letters, Erasmus conceded that it was fear for his reputation that had kept him from an interview with Hutten. This seemed to have appeased Hutten. He was willing to declare the affair an unfortunate misunderstanding, but the manuscript of his expostulation passed into the hands of his friend, Heinrich von Eppendorf, who published it on his own initiative (1524). Hutten's death a few months later failed to quell Erasmus' outrage. He decided to "fight Hutten's shades" and published an agitated reply (*Spongia*, 1525). See W. Kaegi, "Hutten und Erasmus: Ihre Freundschaft und ihr Streit," *Historische Vierteljahrsschrift* 22 (1924–25) 200–278, 461–514; see also Spitz, *Religious Renaissance*, 110–29.

64. Klawiter, 66–68.

65. Klawiter, 104.

66. Klawiter, 66, 100.

67. Klawiter, 225, 210.

68. Böcking 2: 343–45, 329, 341, 332–33.

69. *Iudicium Erasmi Alberi de Spongia Erasmi* (Haguenau, 1524); text in Böcking 2: 373–78. The quotations are on pp. 374–76.

70. The text is in CR 12, 265–71. The quotations appear on pp. 269–70. The speech was delivered by Bartholomäus Kalkreuter in an address at the University of Wittenberg.

71. Witzel, *Epistolae* Dd ii verso, V iv recto.

72. The text of the biography, *De Eobano Hesso Narratio*, is forthcoming from MRTS in H. Vredeveld's edition of Eobanus Hessus' early poems.

73. The letters of 1524/5 are exceptions. During this period Erfurt, Eobanus' place of residence, was the scene of riots and violent confrontations, which naturally elicited comment. Even so, he kept his comments brief, explaining that he was a poet, not a writer of tragedies: *Ego tragicus non sum, natura mitis et placidus et a sanguinolentis tumultibus alienissimus* (Eobanus, *Epistolae*, 110).

74. Camerarius, *De Eobano Hesso Narratio*, 28 and 15–18 (on his support for Erasmus and Luther).

75. In a unique, pragmatic settlement, Erfurt permitted both Catholic and Protestant worship by a treaty of state. See B. Scribner, "Civic Unity and the Reformation in Erfurt," in

O. P. Grell and B. Scribner, eds. *Popular Culture and Popular Movements in Reformation Germany* (London, 1987), 185–216.

76. Eobanus, *Epistolae*, 136, 147.

77. An apocryphal anecdote about Henry VIII and Erasmus, related by the Protestant historian Friedrich Myconius, neatly illustrates the quandary faced by biblical humanists. According to Myconius' informant, the following conversation took place between the English king and the humanist. Henry: "Why don't you defend that good man Luther?" Erasmus: "Because I'm not enough of a theologian; since Louvain has given me the robe of a grammarian, I meddle with no such business" (quoted by P. Smith, *Erasmus: A Study of His Life, Ideals, and Place in History* [New York, 1962], 230, note 1. The anecdote, meant as a tongue-in-cheek comment on Erasmus' perceived hypocrisy, also reflects the pressure put on biblical humanists, who so far had been neither fish nor fowl, to sort out their professional commitments.

78. *Querela*, K v recto. For a modern analysis of conversion, manifest or covert, see U. Mennecke-Haustein, "Konversionen," in W. Reinhard and H. Schilling, eds., *Die Katholische Konfessionalisierung* (Gütersloh, 1995), 242–57.

79. Text in *Monumenta Humanistica Lovaniensia*, ed. H de Vocht (Louvain, 1934), 4: 75–93 (apologia) and 261–80 (biography).

80. Text in IJsewijn, *Martini Dorpii Naldiceni Orationes IV* (Leipzig, 1986), 63–89.

81. IJsewijn, 79; Allen, Ep. 1044:4, 72–73.

82. De Vocht, 64.

83. De Vocht, 271–72; IJsewijn 93, 104.

84. De Vocht, 269.

85. Text in Horawitz, *Erasmus und Lipsius*, 44.

86. *Literae virorum eruditorum ad Franciscum Craneveldium, 1522–1528*, ed. H. de Vocht (Louvain, 1928), 216, 220, 339.

87. De Vocht, *Monumenta*, 238, 272; WA Br 2: 77–80.

88. De Vocht, *Monumenta*, 273, 479–81; Erasmus himself had written in a retrospective on Dorp's life that the Louvain professor had been a champion of the humanities. He cautiously referred to Dorp's sympathies for Luther. Unlike the rest of the Louvain professors, Dorp "did not detest anything that had an affinity to Luther's teachings" (Allen, Ep. 1585:77–78, of July 1525).

89. Zwingli to Vadianus, June 1520, in *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke*, ed. E. Egli et al. (Leipzig, 1911), 7: 328; *Dialogus bilinguium et trilinguium* ("The Dialogue of the Two-Tongued and Three-Tongued"), CWE 7: 341, 346.

90. On Beatus' career see John d'Amico, *Theory and Practice in Renaissance Textual Criticism* (Berkeley, 1988); F. Rapp, "Die elsässischen Humanisten und die geistliche Gesellschaft," in *Humanisten in ihrer politischen und sozialen Umwelt*, ed. O. Herding and R. Stupperich (Boppard, 1980), 87–108; J. Maehly, *Beatus Rhenanus von Schlettstadt* (Mulhausen, 1857).

91. Beatus Rhenanus, *Briefwechsel*, 325.

92. After his move to Selestat Beatus published editions of Pliny (1526), Seneca (1529), Procopius (1531), Tacitus (1533), and Livy (1539). His own historiographical research resulted in his magnum opus, *Rerum germanicarum libri tres* (1531). See the chronological list of his works in R. Wlater, *Beatus Rhenanus, Citoyen de Sélestat* (Strasbourg, 1986), 40–44. He did, however, provide prefatory letters to Erasmus' edition of Origen (Basel: Froben, 1536) and J. Hoffmeister's edition of Chrysostom's *Missa* (Colmar:Gruninger, 1540).

93. His comments on the progress of the Reformation remain sympathetic, however. For example, a letter of 1543 to Boniface Amerbach relating the burning of Luther's and Erasmus' books in Milan concludes: "We need not wonder why whole dioceses, offended by such ac-

tions, throw off the yoke of the Roman tyranny" (*Briefwechsel*, 490). In another letter he tells of a chance meeting with the Basel printer Johann Herwagen. After listening for a while to Beatus' criticism of church abuses, Herwagen asked: "Are you then a Lutheran as well?" (*Briefwechsel*, 483). It is difficult to gauge the import of this anecdote, however, because it is told in a laconic style and offers no comment on the allegation.

94. J. D'Amico, "Beatus Rhenanus, Tertullian, and the Reformation: A Humanist's Critique of Scholasticism," *ARG* 71 (1980): 37–62. The quotations are on p. 58, note 71. Beatus' remarks on confession were attacked by the Louvain theologian Jacques Masson. His treatise *De secreta confessione* (1525) named as the targets "principally Johannes Oecolampadius and Beatus Rhenanus, who in his annotations on Tertullian plainly adopts the position of the Lutheran party concerning the practice of confession" (*Opera*, 104 verso). Much of the treatise was, however, directed at Erasmus, who had just published his *Exomologesis*. His views resembled those of Oecolampadius and Beatus, but an imperial injunction prevented the Louvain scholar from naming him specifically. See E. Rummel, *Erasmus and His Catholic Critics*, 2:7–12.

95. Quoted by D'Amico in "Beatus Rhenanus, Tertullian, and the Reformation," 43.

96. Quoted by D'Amico, "Beatus Rhenanus, Tertullian, and the Reformation," 59, note 76. See Erasmus to Hutten: "But even granted that the primacy of the Pope does not stem directly from Christ, it would nonetheless be expedient for one person's authority to take precedence over that of others" (Klawiter, 210).

97. *Pie et prudenter curiosum esse, sufficiat autoritas ecclesiae, nec novationem ullam aut hic aut alibi quaeramus, quae dissidii mater solet esse* (only in 1539 ed., quoted D'Amico, *Theory and Practice*, 279, note 63).

98. The text is in Beatus Rhenanus *Briefwechsel*, 1–11. The quotations are on p. 10. Sturm mentions Beatus' "prudence" and his love of peace (*ingenii placiditas*, p. 9). On the biography see J. Weiss, "The Technique of Faint Praise: Johann Sturm's 'Life of Beatus Rhenanus,'" *BHR* 43 (1981): 289–302.

99. Beatus Rhenanus, *Briefwechsel*, 590.

100. Beatus Rhenanus, *Briefwechsel*, 334.

101. On Pirckheimer's life and career see N. Holzberg, *Willibald Pirckheimer: Griechischer Humanismus in Deutschland* (Munich, 1981); P. Drews, *Willibald Pirckheimers Stellung zur Reformation* (Leipzig, 1887); for further bibliographical information consult B. Könnecker's article on Pirckheimer in *Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation*, ed. P. Bietenholz and T. Deutscher (Toronto, 1987), 3: 90–94.

102. Böcking 2: 112–13.

103. "*Eck planed down* has raised quite a tempest for me. For they assert that I am the author of this inept piece," he wrote to Hutten. "On all sides enemies attack me—enemies that could frighten even a brave man. But I am still alive, I am still breathing, in spite of their persecutions" (*Opera*, 405).

104. The text is in K. Rück, *Willibald Pirckheimers Schweizerkrieg* (Munich, 1895), 139–52. The sketch begins with the proud declaration that "the Pirckheimer family has always been among the number of families by whom the city of Nürnberg was governed" (139). Pirckheimer informs us that he was "by nature rather inclined to military pursuits" and proceeds to detail his exploits on behalf of the city and the Emperor. According to his own testimony, he played a splendid role in these expeditions; external sources, however, rate his performance as lackluster, if not actually harmful to the military purpose. Pirckheimer emphasizes that he did not neglect his scholarly work even during his tenure as a member of the city council, "for he preferred his studies to all commissions and to all other pleasures" (143).

105. Nützel was instrumental in the move to take control of monastic orders and their properties. In 1524 he was made guardian of St. Clare and published a tract outlining plans for

the convent's reform. His position affected Pirckheimer directly because his sister, Caritas Pirckheimer, was the abbess of St. Clare. See p. 99. On Nützel's pamphlet see M. U. Chrisman, *Conflicting Visions of Reform*, Atlantic Highlands, 1996, 153–55.

106. Rück, 148–49.

107. Rück, 151–52, 148. It is instructive to compare the autobiography with Erasmus' equally discreet obituary for Pirckheimer, which appeared in a posthumously published translation of Gregory of Nazianzen (1531). The overall theme of the obituary is Pirckheimer's good fortune. Erasmus presents to the public the image Pirckheimer himself wished to project. He explained that he was the descendant of an old and respected family, held important offices, made significant contributions to scholarship, enjoyed good health until old age, and died a peaceful death. Erasmus furthermore depicts Pirckheimer as principled and constant, "both in speaking his mind and in executing his plans" (Allen, Ep. 2493: 16–17) and passes over in silence both his troubles as a suspected Lutheran and his difficulties as a reborn Catholic after the city had turned Protestant. He merely hints at certain "slanderers" who tried unsuccessfully to "cast some sort of shadow over his reputation," but does not touch on the nature of the slander (Allen, Ep. 2493: 16–17, 32–37). The subject of the Reformation debate comes up only once, in the most oblique fashion. Erasmus quotes Pirckheimer's last words as: "If only after my death the city would act well, and if only the church were at peace!" (lines 53–54). Nothing in these words indicates that Pirckheimer personally suffered from the decisions of the city council or as a result of the confessional strife. As quoted, the remark appears impersonal. His wish is that of a patriot and a devout man, seemingly at peace with himself and the world.

108. J. Schlecht, *Kilian Leibs Briefwechsel und Diarien* (Munich, 1909), Ep. 13.

109. Rupprich, *Dürer. Schriftlicher Nachlass*, 285–86.

110. On Caritas Pirckheimer see G. Deichstetter, ed., *Caritas Pirckheimer, Ordensfrau und Humanistin* (Cologne, 1982), especially the articles by W. von Loewenich, "Ein Lebensbericht aus evangelischer Sicht" (28–44), and J. Pfanner, "Caritas Pirckheimer—Biographie der Äbtissin" (45–102), and their bibliographies. Caritas' education was guided by her brother, who supplied her with books and vetted her style. She was in contact with well-known humanists such as the poet laureate Conrad Celtis and the painter Albrecht Dürer. She also corresponded with Christoph Scheurl, Kilian Leib, and Konrad Pellikan and, through her brother, came to the attention of Erasmus and Reuchlin.

111. *Briefe von, an und über Caritas Pirckheimer*, Caritas Pirckheimer Quellensammlung Heft 3, ed. J. Pfanner (Landshut, 1967), 122.

112. *Caritas Pirckheimer, Eyn Missive oder Sendbrieff, so die Ebtissin von Nürnberg an den Hochberümten Bock empser geschriben hat fast künstlich und geystlich auch gut Nünnisch getichtet* (Wittenberg, 1523). The text edited by Pfanner (see preceding note) on pp. 121–24 has the marginalia in the footnotes.

113. Pfanner, 263

114. Pfanner, 264–65.

115. See Holberg, 185.

Chapter Five

1. Schlecht, *Kilian Leib*, Epp. 28 (from Adelmann, 1538), 46 (to Hoffmeister, 1546).

2. Witzel, *Epistolae*, O i verso.

3. If Franz von Sickingen, on whom some people pinned their hopes of reward, died, Capito said, "it would be the end of their gospel" (*Entschuldigung*, EE i recto).

4. P. Kalkoff, ed. and trans., *Die Depeschen des Nuntius Aleander vom Wormser Reichstage, 1521* (Halle, 1886), 106; the original text is in P. Balan, ed., *Monumenta reformationis Lutheranae e tabulariis secretioribus s. sedis, 1521–25* (Regensburg, 1884), 47.

5. In an anonymous dialogue composed in 1524 a character assailed Erasmus: "You prefer flattering the Antichrist to eating cabbage" (O. Clemen, *Flugschriften aus den ersten Jahren der Reformation*, [Nieuwkoop, 1967], 1: 325 [13]).

6. Kalkoff, 34, and Balan, 39. Justus Menius brought similar accusations against Crotus Rubeanus, alleging that he had returned to the Catholic faith for the sake of obtaining favors, "hunting for prebends and mining concessions" (Böcking 2: 462).

7. Schlecht, *Kilian Leib*, Ep. 28.

8. For Calvin's attitude, see p. 116 and the literature cited in note 80.

9. *Calvin: Three French Treatises*, ed. F. Higman (London, 1970), 138–39.

10. *Duae Litterae* quoted by E. Droz, *Chemins de l'héresie. Textes et documents* (Geneva, 1933; repr. 1970), 1: 135.

11. Menius did not use the term "Nicodemite," which may well have been a Calvinist neologism. Instead he called Crotus an "Epicurean," the term commonly used of men who lacked piety and did not care about religion or to denote scoffers, skeptics, and hypocrites (see chap. 3). The following quotations come from a letter printed in Böcking 2: 457–58, 462.

12. *De scandalis*, CO 36, 14, 16, 19, 43–45.

13. Böcking 2: 374.

14. In his 1561 controversy against a book written by Cassander (CR 37, 555) where he refers to *neutrales, qui se Nicodemitas falso nominant, solos sapere et manere in gradu, quia se a contentione subducunt* (neutral people, who call themselves [imitators of] Nicodemus, but falsely, and think they alone are wise and are on firm ground because they stay away from the debate). On Cassander, see chap. 6.

15. *De officio pii . . . viri* (s.l., s.p., 1549) 26–28. For a discussion of the book see note 16.

16. Calvin, *Responsio ad versipellem quendam mediatorem* (1561); text in CO 37, 530–57. The quotations are on pp. 532–33. For Luther's characterization of Erasmus, see chap. 3 note 48.

Calvin mistook Cassander's anonymously published pamphlet for the work of the French jurist François Balduin. He accused the writer of levity and dissimulation. Yet Cassander had described the members of the envisaged neutral party as "wishing with all their hearts for that true and sincere peace and concord which agrees with Holy Writ and the tradition of the Catholic church, and they are prepared to make every effort and apply all their power to achieve reconciliation" (*De officio*, 27–28). He distinguished such nonpartisan "intermediaries and peacemakers" from people who were neutral in the sense of refusing to commit to either party. The peacemaker envisaged by Cassander "remains in one camp, but treats the other party with kindness as a citizen of the same republic." His peacemaking role involves "retaining what is fundamental, so that even if the two parties do not completely agree in their practices and opinions, union is maintained for the sake of charity and every effort is made to establish full and solid concord" (*De officio*, 26). He restricts "what is fundamental" to two articles: "faith in Christ's death and resurrection for us; and love of God and charity toward one's neighbor. There is no controversy about these two points, and in them consists the sum of piety" (*De officio*, 30–31). Everything else came under the heading of "subtle questions and prolixity," which Scripture condemned. He admitted that there were legitimate questions, "which give trouble even to learned and pious men, and which are exaggerated by curious and restless men." Here it was important to avoid "obtruding and defending one's own opinion contentiously and pressingly, and rebuffing those who were of a different opinion arrogantly and with insults" (*De officio*, 32).

17. It appears that Cassander was also perceived as an Erasmian by his contemporaries. It is significant that he was consulted by the court of Jülich-Cleves concerning the revision of its church ordinance in 1564. Thirty years earlier it was Erasmus whose opinion had been solicited. See p. 137.

18. Interestingly, Marc Lienhart drew a similar balance from his examination of the group of men in Strasbourg, who were labeled "Epicureans." They were relativists, they tended to dissimulate, and they were humanists: "Leur relativisme était d'ailleurs déjà apparu au paravant. . . . Le comportement social des épicuriens comporte un autre trait intéressant: une certaine réserve, une tendance à la dissimulation. . . . La plupart des épicuriens ont reçu une formation humaniste" ("Exposé introductif," 26).

19. On Urbanus Rhegius see H. Zschoch, *Reformatorische Existenz und konfessionelle Identität: Urbanus Rhegius als evangelischer Theologe in den Jahren 1520 bis 1530* (Tübingen, 1995); M. Liebmann, *Urbanus Rhegius und die Anfänge der Reformation* (Münster, 1980); G. Uhlhorn, *Urbanus Rhegius: Leben und ausgewählte Schriften* (Elberfeld, 1861, repr. Nieuwkoop, 1968).

20. *Opusculum de dignitate sacerdotum*, fols. X verso–XI recto

21. WA Br 2: 61: *non temerario adfectu, sed iudicio ad te amandum ductus est.*

22. To an unidentified addressee, January 1533: "Ich habe auch wol andere tentationes im anfang gehabt, aber sie sind durch Godes gnade verschwunden. Ego non affectu praecipiti, sed iudicio in hanc docendi viam ingressus sum, idque tum, quando aliquot annorum Doctor, Theologiam scholasticam et patres forte non somniculose legissem" (quoted by Zschoch, 14, note 64).

23. *Opera* 2: fol. LXXX recto (*amor ex iudicio*).

24. The poem, entitled *Carmen victoriale*, was signed with the initials "V.R."; the satire and dialogue published with it appeared under the pseudonym Henricus Phoeniceus von Roschach in 1521. See Zschoch's list of Rhegius' works (using the system first devised by Liebmann), 363, items D 23–25.

25. *Simon Hessus*, Aii recto–A iii recto, A iv recto, D i recto.

26. *Simon Hessus*, B i verso–B ii verso, B iv recto, C ii recto-verso.

27. *Simon Hessus*, G iv recto, G iii recto. The satire and the dialogue are combined in the edition printed in Augsburg, Grimm, 1521, which I used. The dialogue was also printed separately; see Zschoch's list, 363, item D 25.

28. *Simon Hessus*, G iv verso to supernummary [G v recto].

29. "[Luther] redt nit wider ordnung vnd oberkait . . . aber er will in gaistlicher oberkait kain weltlichen pomp"; "er verwerff die siben sacrament nit, allain er sagt man mögs nit all usz der schrifft probieren"; "wer redt das Luther die bicht well abthon, der luingt jn schantlich an; Luther bringt kain nüwen glouben aber er leert dich den alten wol basz verston, dann man in vierhundert jaren hab gelernt" (*Anzeygung*, A iiii recto, B iii recto, C i recto, D i recto). For a detailed discussion of the work, see Liebmann, 148–52.

30. Two papal briefs (March 1521) to the chapter and the Bishop of Augsburg, respectively, demanded a recantation. See Liebmann, 141. No such recantation is extant.

31. The letter is cited by Liebmann, 147: *Poteram si affectibus remississem frena mea valedictione totam urbem in sacerdotes concitare...nisi Christiana prohibuisset modestia, qua tum suppresso animi dolore iustissimo causas abitus mei in meum ipsius caput conjeci.*

32. Wilhelm Rem, *Cronica newer geschichten*, in F. Roth, ed., *Die Chroniken der deutschen Städte* (Leipzig, 1896), 25: 199.

33. CWE, Ep. 1253: 35, 6–11, 17–19.

34. Zwingli, *Werke* 7: 537.

35. *Vadianische Briefsammlung* 2: 443.

36. In May 1522 he departed for Saxony. His preaching was too radical even for Lutheran tastes. He was later accused of siding with the rebels in the Peasants' War and moved to Baden-Baden in 1526. See J. Rogge, *Der Beitrag des Predigers Jakob Strauss zur frühen Reformationsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1957).

37. Translated from the text quoted by Uhlmann, 49–50.

38. Translated from the text quoted by Uhlhorn, 48–51.

39. He tried to pass off this journey as recreational, undertaken "to please his fancy" (*animi gratia*) in a letter to Capito (O. Millet, *Correspondance de Wolfgang Capiton (1478–1541)*, Strasbourg, 1982, 162).

40. See Millet, 162, and Capito's reply, 163, in which he questioned the purpose of such an apologia before the bishops.

41. Translated from the texts quoted in Liebmann, 170 and 168–69.

42. *Opera*, β 2 recto, 3 recto, 2 verso.

43. *Opera*, β 2 verso.

44. Achilles Pirmin Gasser, *Annales . . . rei publicae Augsburgensis* in *Scriptores rerum Germanicarum*, ed. J. Mencken Burchard (Leipzig, 1728) 1: cols. 1315–1954; on Urbanus, cols. 1759, 1776–77, 1779–80; the work was composed in the 1570s and first published in German 1595/6.

45. *Annales*, cols. 1776. 1779.

46. *Annales*, col. 1779. A short sketch in Heinrich Pantaleon's biographical lexicon, *Prosopographiae heroum atque illustrium virorum totius Germaniae . . . opus* (Basel: Brillinger, 1565–66, p. 178), offers little additional information.

47. For his life and career see B. Stierle, *Capito als Humanist* (Gütersloh, 1974); J. Kittelson, *Wolfgang Capito: From Humanist to Reformer* (Leiden, 1975); F. Herrmann, *Die evangelische Bewegung zu Mainz im Reformationszeitalter* (Mainz, 1907); W. Kalkoff, *Wolfgang Capito im Dienste Erzbischof Albrechts von Mainz* (Berlin, 1907). A summary of his correspondence can be found in Millet (see note 39).

48. *Homilia de eo quod dixit Apostolus . . .* (Basel: Cratander, 1519), A ii recto. His humanistic leanings are also evident from a postscript and poem added to an edition of Summenhart's commentary on Albertus Magnus (*Conradi Summenhart, Commentarii in Summam physice Alberti Magni* [Haguenau: Gran, 1507]).

49. Quoted Stierle, *Capito als Humanist*, 46, note 97.

50. Erasmus prevented a reprint. See Allen, Ep. 1634:52. For Capito's preface and notes see Stierle, 108.

51. The lectures, taken down by a student, are preserved in the Zentralbibliothek in Zurich (MS D 96). The scholastic term appears on 22 verso. The notes begin in February 1518 and continue until Lent 1519, that is, they coincide with Capito's edition of Luther's works.

52. See Kittelson, 69–70; Millet, 104.

53. Zwingli, *Werke* 7: 355.

54. WA Br 2: 416, December 1521.

55. Letters to Aleandro show him skillfully combining assurances of loyalty with requests to obtain letters of provision for the provostship of St. Thomas. A letter he composed on Albert's behalf to Charles V shows, however, that he was not acting in Aleandro's spirit (see his letter concept, printed Kalkoff, *Capito*, 141). Cochlaeus in his *Historia vitae et actorum Lutheri* (Paris, 1565, f. 36; quoted Herrmann, p. 78) describes Capito as a man "who is admittedly erudite and eloquent, but very shrewd and of a more than fox-like cunning." His duplicity was also lampooned in the anonymous *Hochstratus ovans* (Böcking Suppl. 1: 480).

56. The meeting is described in CR 1: 463–64.

57. According to a letter from the Wittenberg student Albert Burer to Beatus Rhenanus (*Briefwechsel*, 4), Capito came to Wittenberg "to make up with Luther, whom something in his letters [i.e., his plea for connivance] had offended to such an extent that they say he was called a virulent beast by Martin. But now they are on good terms, I hear. Capito began to like what he had disliked before [i.e., Luther's direct approach]."

58. In a letter to Erasmus in August 1522, for example, he spoke of "us papists" (*nos pontificii*, Allen, Ep. 1308:10); in a letter of July 1523 to Rhegius he identified himself with Luther's

party, speaking of the Catholic clergy as "rabbis" and declaring his willingness to suffer for his beliefs and "to meet the foe in hand-to-hand combat" (quoted Kittelson, 92, note 19).

59. See his letter to Erasmus, Ep. 1374:14–16: "I came across some sparks here and there (*incitamenta hinc et hinc emicantia*) of some future drama, which may affect you significantly" (Luther's *Iudicium de Erasmo* was published together with his letter to Capito). See note 88 for verbal parallels to Erasmus' letters and an anonymous apologia.

60. See Aleandro's letter to Capito, in Friedensburg, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 16: 499; the letter is not dated.

61. Strasbourg, 24 April 1523, quoted Kalkoff, 127, note 2 (= Millet, 157).

62. In July 1521 Mosellanus had written: "I hear that you are engineering your departure in spite of enjoying the favour of men of standing." In September of the same year, Andreas Cratander wrote that he was looking forward to Capito's return to Basel (quoted by Herrmann, 100, note 249).

63. *Entschuldigung*, BB i recto; see BB ii recto, where he vows to obey the *oberkeit* (superiors), among whom he includes the "holy pope, Your Grace, the dean and chapter of St. Thomas."

64. Hedio complained about Capito's attitude to Oecolampadius, who admonished Capito to show a more generous spirit (*Briefe Oekolampads* 1: 255–56). Hedio had become cathedral preacher at Mainz in January 1521, succeeding Capito after his elevation to councillor. His position, like Capito's, had become untenable by 1523.

65. *Entschuldigung*, BB iv recto, CC iv recto.

66. *Entschuldigung*, CC iv verso, DD i recto.

67. *Das die pfafheit . . .*, a v verso. The pamphlet is dated Strasbourg, 7 December 1524.

68. He told Karlstadt that he did not wish to get involved in the dispute because of the vehemence of the combatants. He gave this advice also to Hartmann of Hallwil. Cochlaeus, too, acknowledged Capito's desire to remain neutral but noted that the Lutherans feared that his neutrality meant tacit approval of the Catholic party. See Millet, 74, 123, 124; Zwingli, *Werke* 7: 465 (both sides in the debate acted like "furies," he said); WA Br 2: 222 (Dec. 1520).

69. *Werke* 7: 466: *Est omnino ordo aliquis servandus civitatis christianae. Emendandi mores recepti, non subvertendi. Dissui, non rescindi potest antiqua consuetudo.*

70. *Entschuldigung*, BB ii verso–BB iii recto.

71. *Entschuldigung*, FF ii recto; supernummary leaf following HH iv verso.

72. *Entschuldigung*, BB ii recto, see also CC iv recto and DD iv verso.

73. *Entschuldigung*, GG ii recto.

74. *Entschuldigung*, EE iii recto, GG i recto.

75. *Entschuldigung*, HH iv verso.

76. For the text of the unfinished work, in which Capito calls Luther *evangelica tuba* and *ecclesiastes verus* (trumpet of the gospel, true preacher, p. 194), see O. Millet, "Un pamphlet prolutherien inedit de W. F. Capiton," *RHPR* 63 (1983) 181–200. Millet dates the pamphlet to the summer of 1523.

77. Allen, Ep. 541: 95–96.

78. Allen, Ep. 1158: 19–22, published in *Epistolae diversae*, August 1521.

79. Modern historians have pointed out that Calvin used the term "Nicodemite" in a diffuse sense and have therefore attempted to devise categories for sixteenth-century usage (libertines, evangelicals, etc.). On the problem of making such distinctions see H. Oberman, *The Impact of the Reformation: Essays* (Grand Rapids, 1994), 190–92.

80. He has been called the first defender of the principle of Nicodemism, but this theory, which is based on haphazard evidence, is now generally discarded. The theory was first presented by C. Ginzburg, *Il Nicodemismo. Simulazione e dissimulazione religiosa nell' Europa del '500* (Turin, 1970, chaps. 1–2); for a refutation of this theory see C. Eire, "Calvin and Nico-

demism: A Reappraisal," *SCJ* 10 (1979): 45–69; Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986); P. Zagorin, *Ways of Lying: Dissimulation, Persecution, and Conformity in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990), esp. 68–69; P. Matheson, "Martyrdom or Mission? A Protestant Debate," *ARG* 80 (1989): 154–71; P. Fraenkel, "Bucer's Memorandum of 1541 and a Littera Nicodemitica of Capito's," *BHR* 36 (1974): 575–87.

81. *Pandectarum Veteris et Novi Testamenti Libri Duodecim* (Strasbourg, 1528). Brunfels refers to the example of Naaman the Syrian, who venerated the idol but had God in his heart and to Paul's famous words "I am all things to all men," but this hardly supports Ginzburg's contention that "Thanks to the *Pandects*, these words . . . were destined to become the slogan of the theorist of dissimulation" (*Il Nicodemismo*, 76).

82. Friedensburg in *Zeitschift für Kirchengeschichte* 16: 494–95.

83. WA Br 2: 223; Allen, Ep. 1241:48–49

84. Allen, Ep. 2631: 86–89.

85. The text of the letter is printed in A. Hegler, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mystik in der Reformationszeit* (Berlin, 1906), 31–41.

86. Text ed. P. Fraenkel in *Buceri Opera Latina*, vol. 4. For the genesis of the work see the introduction, xvi–xvii; on the relationship between Bucer's *Concilium* and a Bologne manuscript that Ginzburg identified as the letter circulating in Germany under Capito's name see Fraenkel's article disproving this theory (cited in note 80).

87. On the continuity of Bucer's views on this point see F. Higman, "Bucer et les Nicodemites," in C. Krieger and M. Lienhard, eds., *Martin Bucer and Sixteenth Century Europe* (Leiden, 1993), 2: 645–58.

88. Text in WA Br 2: 437–41. The manuscript is headed "Trucksess," perhaps Jacob Truchsess of Rheinfelden, who served as Capito's secretary for a while, owned a house in Basel, and had connections with the Amerbach family (see CEBR 3: 348). It is dated 30 July 1523 "at our premises in Wittenberg" (which may be a dodge). The author refers to the printer, who published an unauthorized edition of Luther's letter to Capito (or the person who made the manuscript available to Schott) as "my book-agent" and an *affinis*, a word that, in classical Latin at least, denotes a relative by marriage. The imagery of a fire arising *ex gliscente velitatione, prodita libellis et epistolis aliquot hinc et hinc* recalls a contemporary letter from Capito to Erasmus (Allen, Ep. 1374:15, *incitamenta hinc et hinc emicantia*) and Erasmus' letter to Marcus Laurinus, Ep. 1342:813–14 (*provolant hinc atque hinc aliquot epistolae, ceu velites, nescio quid minitantes*).

89. See chap. 4, note 50.

90. The quotations are on lines 50–51, 68–72, 82–85, 91, 97 (*ratio diversa, ratio contraria*), and 113–17 of the text in WA Br 2 (see note 88).

91. CO 34: 631–34: Calvin allows lay persons to migrate from Catholic to Protestant territories to escape persecution, but declares that a pastor "should die ten deaths rather than desert his post voluntarily." He also concedes to lay persons the right to give evasive answers when interrogated "as long as the ambiguity does not give the impression that you agree with impious practices." He does not condone an outright lie: "In sum, all equivocations through which we wish to placate the furor of impious men by seemingly denying the truth, are foreign to all Christians, in my opinion. For God . . . abominates sophistry" (CO 34: 631–34). He completely rejects compliance with Catholic rites, specifically attendance at mass or going to confession. He acknowledges that he may appear to be inflexible, but he must be forgiven if he "does not dare to lighten the yoke of Christ even in the smallest degree" (CO 34: 635–40).

92. Bucer, *Opera* 4: 176–77.

93. See the text, entitled "An liceat illicitis impiorum communicare sacris," in Hegler, 36–40. In his response Calvin tries hard to express his views as inoffensively as possible. He

clarifies that "we do not require a profession of faith from everyone, but only that a pious man . . . *strive* to profess it" (37); he also concedes that there are some rites that "have deteriorated into superstition, but whose observance is not reprehensible if it is done without superstition," but he draws the line at attending mass without protesting, for in that case compliance gave the impression of "agreeing with idolatry and acts of sacrilege" (37). He further concedes that in regions controlled by the papists sparks of the true church can be found, but "I cannot recognize in the popish congregations the certain aspect of the church, as it is expressed for us in Scripture" (39). He specifies which ceremonies are to be rejected: veneration of saints if connected with indulgences; adoration of the host; masses for the dead; blessing of water; monastic orders; etc. He does not, however, counsel exile: "That is not what I urge you to do specifically" (40), but he does not want anyone to slip into a comfortable arrangement with the church and "be clement with yourself, condoning your own weakness" (40). Rather the final goal of establishing an evangelical church must remain imprinted on the mind of those living under the regime of the Old Church.

94. WA Br 2: 417–18 (Dec. 1521); CR 2: 430–34.

95. Melanchthon at CR 1: 465, where he notes that Capito was under Erasmus' influence. In fact, Capito himself acknowledged as much to Luther. He was following the advice of Erasmus, he said, "a man who is neither lacking in discernment nor inspiration" (WA Br 2: 417, Dec. 1521). For Melanchthon's tract of 1545 (*Iudicium . . . utrum in persecutione liceat dissimulare suam sententiam de evangelio*; "Judgment . . . whether it is permitted in times of persecution to conceal one's opinion about the gospel") see CR 5: 735–39; the quotation is at 738.

96. For Luther on Erasmus' "Epicureanism" see chapter 3, note 48.

Chapter Six

1. For a recent historical account see the detailed examination of A. P. Luttenberger, *Glaubenseinheit und Reichsfriede: Konzeptionen und Wege konfessionsneutraler Reichspolitik (1530–1552)* (Göttingen, 1982), with extensive bibliography. Luttenberger characterizes the expectations in 1530 as follows: "die Wiederherstellung des religiösen Konsensus . . . dachten sich Kaiser und Reichstagmehrheit . . . in zwei Schritten: durch die Rückkehr der Protestierenden zur alten Kirche bis zu einem Konzil und dann durch eine gesamtkirchliche Reform auf einem Generalkonzil. Dieses Konzept ging stillschweigend von der Annahme aus, dass der Konzilsbegriff nicht kontrovers sei" (30–31). See also H. Eells, "The Failure of Church Unification Efforts during the German Reformation," *ARG* 42 (1951): 160–74; F. W. Kantzenbach, *Das Ringen um die Einheit der Kirche im Jahrhundert der Reformation* (Stuttgart, 1957).

On the religious colloquies following the Diet of Augsburg, see G. Müller, ed., *Die Religionsgespräche der Reformationszeit*, (Gütersloh, 1980); M. Hollerbach, *Das Religionsgespräch als Mittel der konfessionellen und politischen Auseinandersetzung im Deutschland des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Diss., Frankfurt, 1982); P. Fraenkel, *Einigungsbestrebungen in der Reformationszeit* (Wiesbaden, 1965). For the involvement of humanists in the negotiations see R. Stupperich, *Der Humanismus und die Wiedervereinigung der Konfessionen* (Leipzig, 1936). See also note 56.

2. As defined by Cicero, *De oratore* 3.55.211.

3. The original plan called for a boy to give the oration, a common practice on festive occasions. After some deliberation, however, the occasion and the subject were declared unsuited to a young speaker. The oration was accordingly modified and entrusted to Otto Pack, chancellor of Duke George of Saxony, the host of the debate. At the last moment and when he had already memorized most of the speech, Pack developed a sore throat, so that the author

—Mosellanus—was called upon to deliver his own speech. The published version of the oration is the original speech put into the mouth of a child.

4. *De ratione*, A iv recto.

5. See Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 6.2.13, who defines *ethos* as the skill by which "the orator is recommended to our approval by goodness . . . by being ingratiating and courteous."

6. On the question of the relationship between verbal aggression and militant action in the Reformation debate see B. Scribner, "Preconditions of Tolerance and Intolerance in Sixteenth-Century Germany," in O. P. Greel and B. Scribner, eds., *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation* (Cambridge, 1996), esp. 45–46.

7. *De ratione*, B i recto–B ii recto.

8. *De ratione*, B iii recto.

9. See the introduction to the text of the controversy by H. Jones in CWE 83: 2–3.

10. *De ratione*, C iv verso, C ii recto.

11. See Allen, Epp. 948, 980.

12. CWE, Ep. 948:47–51.

13. CWE, Ep. 980: 27–58.

14. LB 5: 781B–782F.

15. The following quotations (page numbers in brackets) are from G. Majensius, ed., *Joannis Ludovici Vivis Opera Omnia* (Valencia, 1784) vol. 5. For a discussion of Vives' concept of peace see P. Dust, *Three Renaissance Pacifists: Essays in the Theories of Erasmus, More, and Vives* (New York, 1987); E. George, "Rhetorical Strategies in Vives' Peace Writings: The Letter to Charles V and the *De Concordia*," in G. Tournoy and D. Sacré, eds., *Ut Granum Sinapis: Essays on Neo-Latin Literature in Honour of Jozef IJsewijn* (Louvain, 1997), 249–63.

16. Vives, *Opera*, 190, 252, 310–11.

17. *Opera*, 310, 251, 253.

18. *Opera*, 252, 318.

19. *Tractatus quidam solennis de arte et modo inquirendi quoscunque haereticos* (n.d., n.p.) Aa ii recto, Aa iv recto.

20. *Apologia* (Leipzig, 1531), B i verso, C i verso.

21. However, nonaggressive language was recommended, for example, by Urbanus Rhegius, who wrote a tract instructing preachers in *Formulae caute et citra scandalum loquendi de praecipuis Christianae doctrinae locis* ("Formulae for speaking cautiously and without giving offense on the principal commonplaces of Christian doctrine"), written in 1535; text in *Opera Latine edita* (Nürnberg, 1562), 76ff.

22. LB 10: 1278A–C. For Luther's rejection of accommodation see chaps. 3 and 5.

23. *Erotematum dialectices libri IV* (CR 13: 594).

24. *Erotemata dialectices* (editions Wittenberg, 1560, and Haguenau, 1528; not in CR) quoted by B. Bauer, "Die Wahrheit wird euch frei machen," 95, notes 55, 56. See her discussion of Melanchthon's "Rhetorik des Streitens" (rhetoric of dispute) and literature on the subject, "Die Wahreit wird euch frei machen," 89–101.

25. Klawiter, 268, 271–72.

26. Klawiter, 66–68, 88, see also 120.

27. Böcking 2: 327, 331, 343–45. Elsewhere Brunfels asked pointedly: "What business does the gospel and letters in Germany have to do with your tragedy? Will no one read good literature and no one listen to the gospel, will there be no honest man left in Germany because someone dared to oppose you and say that you do not walk according to the gospel?" (Böcking 2: 326).

28. *Iudicium Erasmi Alberi* (Böcking 2: 374).

29. Friedensburg, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 20: 244–56. For Melanchthon's letter see CR 3: 378–83.

30. See pp. 60, 87.

31. Friedensburg, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 245–47.

32. Friedensburg, 248–49. It appears therefore that critics protested not only the attitude but even the language of accommodation. See Luther's angry reaction in 1543 to Bucer's efforts to use conciliatory language: *Er ist ein Kleppermaul, gehet mir mit den conciliationibus umb. Aber er soll bei mir ausconcilirt haben* ("He is a blathermouth, going around talking about 'conciliations.' I have had it with his 'conciliations'!")(quoted by Scheible, *Melanchthon: Eine Biographie*, 165).

33. The rules are reprinted in M. Hollerbach, *Das Religionsgespräch*, 265–67.

34. Allen, Ep. 2373:23–24; Simon Pistorius and Johann von Vlatten also pleaded with Erasmus to bring his authority to bear on the matter. Erasmus, however, wrote to Melanchthon, declaring pessimistically that the task of reconciliation could not be accomplished, not even by ten councils. On his attitude and role in 1530 see E. Honée, "Erasmus und die Religionsverhandlungen der deutschen Reichstage (1524–1530)," in *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality*, ed. M. Mout et al. (Amsterdam, 1997), 65–75; B. Lohse, "Erasmus und die Verhandlungen auf dem Reichstag zu Augsburg 1530," in H. Immenkötter et al., eds., *Im Schatten der Confessio Augustana. Die Religionsverhandlungen des Augsburger Reichstages 1530 im historischen Kontext* (Münster, 1997), 71–83.

35. Erasmus did, however, write privately to the Bishop of Augsburg and to the Emperor. Justus Jonas commented in a letter to Luther that his advice was typically Erasmian, that is, prevaricating: "[To the Bishop] he wrote that he approved communion in both kinds, marriage of priests, correction and reformation of the practice of endowed masses, although he had doubts about private masses. To the Emperor, however, he wrote that this was an important matter and one must not rush in. If a reformation was needed, it must begin with the head, the Roman Pope" (WBr 5: 512 of July 1530).

36. See CR 2: 122–23, a report of the Nürnberg delegates to the council of June 1530, according to which Melanchthon told Valdés that they were not as far apart or as uncooperative as had perhaps been impressed on the Emperor. The main problematic areas were the interpretation of the Eucharist, celibacy, and private masses. Everything else could be sorted out ("és sollten sonst in allen andern wohl Mittel und gute Ordnung gefunden werden"). Valdés reported that the Emperor was favorably impressed and wished to continue negotiations, but recommended that this be done as quietly as possible and involving as few negotiators as possible. The literature on Melanchthon's role in 1530 and in the wake of the Diet is extensive. For a summary see most recently H. Scheible, *Melanchthon: Eine Biographie* (Munich, 1997), esp. 109–16.

37. CR 2: 171–72. A similar letter written to the Archbishop of Mainz remained confidential; it was published only in 1920 by G. Bossert, "Drei Briefe Melanchthons," *ARG* 17 (1920): 67–73. The text of the letter to the Archbishop is on pp. 67–69.

38. CR 2: 611, 617. Similarly, Capito expounded his views on a possible accord to the Archbishop in the dedicatory letter accompanying his translation of Erasmus' *Concord*. On the Catholic side, Witzel addressed a letter on the subject to the Archbishop. He, too, published a translation of the Erasmian tract. For Capito's and Witzel's translations see pp. 134, 141. The text of Witzel's letter to the Archbishop, *Adhortatiuncula ut vocetur concilium*, dated 1532, was added to Ortvin Gratius' *Fasciculus rerum expetendarum et fugiendarum* by the seventeenth-century editor, Thomas James (London, 1690), 2: 780–83.

39. Critical Latin text in ASD 5-3, 258–313.

40. ASD 5-3, 301, 303, 302.

41. ASD 5-3, 308–9. Few of Erasmus' contemporaries, however, were prepared to regard the issues of free will, *sola fide*, auricular confession, and the nature of the Eucharist disputable subjects, as Erasmus does. He wanted the question of free will held in abeyance or

discussed only in terms of a collation of passages, as he himself had done in the *Diatribe*. Concerning confession, his advice is to allow those who believe that it was instituted by Christ "to observe it devoutly and let others enjoy their own interpretation" (307). With respect to the mass, he sees no need to label a custom "that has been accepted for so many centuries as a pestilent and impious practice" (308). He refers only fleetingly to the Sacramentarian question, noting that it was futile to attempt a settlement when the reformers themselves could not agree among themselves.

42. ASD 5-3, 302–4, 311.

43. *Veritas illa pacifica*, ASD 5-3, 304.

44. Basel: Froben (1533 and 1534); Antwerp: Grapheus (1533); Antwerp: Hillen (1533, twice); Cologne: Cervicornus (1533 and 1535); Leipzig:Faber (1533 and 1535); Paris: Wechel (1533). See R. Stupperich's introduction to the text in ASD 5-3, 254–55.

45. Friedensburg, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 18: 261–62. To Aleandro he reported that "many in our party raise an outcry against the book *De Concordia*; yet I think it is more tolerable for us than for the heretics. Certainly I would not want the man [Erasmus] to be pushed into the other camp by insults from our party" (Friedensburg, 249).

46. Letter to Carnesecchi, 5 Nov. 1533, in *Nuntiaturberichte aus Deutschland*, ed. W. Friedensburg (Gotha, 1892) 1-1, 138–39. For the text of his unfinished critique of Erasmus' *Concord* see E. Rummel and L. E. Hunt, "Vergerio's Invective against Erasmus: A Manuscript in the Marciana in Venice," *NAKG* 80 (2000) 1–19. Ironically, Vergerio himself was tried for heresy in 1545 and left the church in 1549.

47. The text is in *Iacobi Latomi . . . Opera* (Louvain, 1550), 172–82. It is prefaced by a note of the editor, explaining that the author had left the treatise unrevised. The editor had arranged what he found on "pieces of paper, variously cut up" and had found it "amazingly difficult to put it together in the form of a book" (171 recto). The quotations in this paragraph appear on 172 recto–175 recto.

48. Güttel's sermon of 1541 is cited in Döllinger 1: 567; Otto's view is stated in his *Gütlicher Bericht von den Antinomern* (Regensburg, 1559), D 2 verso.

49. A. Franzen speculated about Gratius' rationale for publishing this incongruous collection: "Was it his purpose to provide a catalogue of burning questions or did he merely intend to give the broadest possible spectrum of views, or does the work reflect the general lack of direction among reformers, who could not agree on one approach?" (*Bischof und Reformation: Erzbischof Hermann von Wied in Köln vor der Entscheidung zwischen Reform und Reformation*, Münster, 1971, 41).

50. *Fasciculus* 1: 478–79, 483. I used the edition of Thomas James (see note 38).

51. *Fasciculus*, 1: 484.

52. For Corvinus' life see P. Tschackert, *Antonius Corvinus, Leben und Schriften* (Hannover, 1900), and Tschackert, ed., *Briefwechsel des Antonius Corvinus* (Hannover, 1900). The quotation is on p. 1 of the latter. Corvinus admired Erasmus' work as a humanist and published a selection of his *Apophthegmata* in 1534.

53. *Quatenus expediat . . . Erasmi de sarcienda ecclesiae concordia rationem sequi, tantisper dum adparatur synodus, iudicium* (Wittenberg, 1534), B 1 verso, B 2 verso–3 recto

54. *Quatenus expediat*, B 3 recto-verso, B 4 verso.

55. *Quatenus expediat*, D 3 recto-verso.

56. See the overview of literature by C. Augustijn, "Die Religionsgespräche der vierziger Jahre," in G. Müller, ed., *Die Religionsgespräche der Reformationszeit* (Gütersloh, 1980), 43–53. For other literature see above, note 1.

57. *Der Briefwechsel des Antonius Corvinus*, 249 (1549).

Melanchthon had earlier condemned what he styled "Witzelian accommodation" (CR 3: 962–63).

58. Tschackert, *Briefwechsel des Antonius Corvinus*, 90.

59. The 1544 edition of the dialogue appears at the end of *De integro sacramento corporis et sanguinis domini* (Hannover, 1544).

60. *Quatenus expediat* (ed. 1544), I 2 recto-verso.

61. *Quatenus expediat*, M 2 verso–3 recto. In another section Corvinus added a defense of Luther. In the first edition the character named Julianus cited Erasmus' criticism of Luther's "paradoxes" without meeting any objection. In the second edition, Corvinus replied that Erasmus' criticism was misdirected. Luther may have used extreme language, but he had added explanations, which Erasmus now ignored (L 4 recto).

62. Capito's translation was entitled *Von der Kirchen lieblicher Vereinigung und von hinlegung dieser zeit haltenden spaltung in der glauben leer, geschrieben durch den hochgelehrten und weit beriempten Herren Des. Eras. von Roterdam. . . . Von befridung der Kirchen an den hochwurdigsten etc. Erzbischof und Churfuersten zu Menz und Magdeburg etc. Doctor Wolfgang Capito.* The translation is dated October 1533 and appeared from the press of Apiarius in Strasbourg. For Capito's relationship with Erasmus see p. 116.

63. ASD 5-3, 304 (although he described discussing the subject of free will as *spinosa verius quam frugifera*, "thorny rather than fruitful"), 306, 307–8.

64. *Von der kirchen*, A iii recto-verso.

65. *Furbereytung zum Concilio, wie alle recht Gotssfortigen von beden, yetz furnemen theylen . . . zu Einigkeit Christlicher Kirchen kommen*, text in *Martin Bucer. Deutsche Schriften*, ed. W. Hage (Gütersloh, 1978), 5: 259–362.

66. *Von der kirchen*, [no letter] ii recto.

67. T. Schiess, ed., *Briefwechsel der Brüder Ambrosius und Thomas Blaurer 1509–1548*, (Freiburg, 1908–12), I 461, 452.

68. See Hage's preface to the text of *Furbereytung* (above, note 65), 264.

69. *Furbereytung*, 275, 357–58.

70. Quoted in *Furbereytung*, 268.

71. This gave rise to the proverb "The Duke of Cleves is pope in his territory" (quoted C. Schulte, *Versuchte Konfessionelle Neutralität im Reformationszeitalter*, Münster, 1996, p. 11, note 25). On the Jülich-Cleve ordinance see O. Redlich, *Jülich-bergische Kirchenpolitik am Ausgange des Mittelalters und in der Reformationszeit* (Bonn, 1907; repr. Düsseldorf, 1986), vol. 1: *Urkunden und Akten 1400–1553*; H. Smolinsky, "Jülich-Kleve-Berg" in *Katholisches Leben und Kirchenreform im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung*, ed. K. Ganzer (Münster, 1991), vol. 51, 86–107; Smolinsky, "Erasmianismus in der Politik? Das Beispiel der vereinigten Herzogtümer Jülich-Kleve-Berg," in *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality*, ed. M. Mout et al. (Amsterdam, 1997), 77–89; J. P. Dolan, *The Influence of Erasmus, Witzel, and Cassander in the Church Ordinances and Reform Proposals of the United Duchies of Cleve during the Middle Decades of the 16th Century* (Münster, 1957).

72. A. Luttenberger, 143.

73. Redlich 1: 227. However, when Johann's daughter Sybille became engaged to the Protestant Johann Friedrich of Saxony, his court preacher Friedrich Myconius was permitted to challenge a local Franciscan to a public disputation (19 Feb. 1527).

74. It was at the request of Heresbach that Erasmus dedicated to Wilhelm a treatise *On the Education of Boys* (1529) and a collection of classical apothegms (1531). To Vlatten, Erasmus dedicated two editions of Ciceronian texts.

75. Allen, Ep. 2845:1–8. Presumably he did offer some advice since the Duke made him a present of 30 gold pieces. A contemporary letter fragment without address suggests that Erasmus' advice was sought also in other quarters. Erasmus writes to an unknown addressee: "If moderation is used on both sides, these upheavals may perhaps gradually cease and things return to a state of tranquillity. This is the counsel followed by the Duke of Jülich and attended

by success, he says" (Allen, Ep. 2853:59–61). The editor, P. S. Allen, suggests in his headnote to the letter that this was meant for the Archbishop of Cologne.

76. "Bös Teutsch, bös Evangelisch, alles was von Erasmo kömmt, ist so voll Theologia als mein femoral voll Pfeffers" (attributed to Luther by his contemporary, the Westphalian theologian and historian Hermann Hamelmann, *Opera genealogico-historica de Westphalia et Saxonia inferiori* [Lemgo, 1711], 991).

77. In his comment on the ordinance at Jülich-Cleve, Redlich, 1: 275. For Melanchthon's attitude on the role of secular rulers in the Reformation in general see J. Estes, "The Role of Godly Magistrates in the Church: Melanchthon as Luther's Interpreter and Collaborator," *Church History* 67 (1998): 463–83; and Estes, "*Officium principis christiani*: Erasmus and the Origins of the Protestant State Church," ARG 83 (1992): 49–72.

78. CR 3: 897, to Philip of Hesse, January 1541; 963, to the council of Nürnberg, February 1540.

79. CR 3: 960–63, 964, 967. Melanchthon here speaks of *moderationes . . . Vicelianas* ("Witzelian moderations," p. 962). "Flexibility" is criticized in Erasmus by Luther (see p. 60) and in Cassander by Calvin (see p. 104).

80. He later explained that he had been misled: "I was misled by others . . . . little blame attaches to the man who is lured into a trap by those who are in the know. It was very easy to wound and capture my defenseless little soul" (*Epistolae*, Dd ii verso–Dd iii recto).

On Witzel see W. Trusen, *Um die Reform und Einheit der Kirche: Zum Leben und Werk Georg Witzels* (Münster, 1956); B. Henze, "Erasmianisch: Die 'Methode,' Konflikte zu lösen? Das Wirken Witzels und Cassanders," *Erasmianism: Idea and Reality*, ed. M. Mout et al. (Amsterdam, 1997), 155–68; O. Clemen, "Reunionsvorschläge Georg Witzels von 1540," ARG 10 (1913): 101–5; G. Richter, *Die Schriften Georg Witzels bibliographisch bearbeitet* (Fulda, 1913), which discusses Witzel's own catalogue of works. For an update of the information provided by Richter see the list of Witzel's works in B. Henze's definitive *Aus Liebe zur Kirche Reform: Die Bemühungen Georg Witzels (1501–1573) um die Kircheneinheit* (Münster, 1995).

81. Friedensburg in *Zeitschift für Kirchengeschichte* 19: 248–49. Julius Pflug, to whom Erasmus had dedicated his *Concord*, interpreted the humanist's efforts in similar terms: "It is perhaps Erasmus' intention to bring his initiative to bear on the matter by having both parties relinquish something" (J. Pollet, *Julius Pflug Correspondance*, Leiden, 1969, 1: 348).

82. Friedensburg, *Zeitschift für Kirchengeschichte*, 248, 252. Cochlaeus, however, gave a very different description to Aleandro in 1532. He praised Witzel as a man of excellent learning, "who was a Lutheran for more than ten years, but has now had a change of heart and wishes to be a son of the church rather than of the sect. He writes harshly against Luther's sect, in Latin and German, and for this reason the Lutherans are most hostile against him. But the good man [Witzel] has not found anywhere among us refuge, help, or comfort, as he deserves" (Friedensburg, *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, 237).

83. *Ludus in defectionem Georgii Vvicelii ad papistas* (Wittenberg, 1534). It appeared under the pseudonym "Sylvanus Hessus." The quotation appears on D iv recto. This may be the "lost" work to which Tschackert refers in *Antonius Corvinus, Leben und Schriften*, 202. See Melanchthon's reaction (CR 2: 621): "I have read your dialogue, and I like it. But you must spare Crotus. Even if he is not treated roughly, I have reason nevertheless, not to irritate him any further." Luther did not spare Crotus, however. He called him *Dottor [sic] Kroete* (Doctor Toad) and the Archbishop's *Tellerlecker* (plate-licker) (WA 38: 84).

84. WA Br 7: 29.

85. Amsdorf in WA Br VII: 16–17; Witzel in *Epistolae*, e iv verso–f i recto.

86. *Epistolae*, Ff iv verso; Allen, Ep. 2716:55–57, 100.

87. Allen, Ep. 2786:5–6, 38–56.

88. See Henze, "Erasmisch," 155–68.

89. Allen, Ep. 2918:6–7, Erasmus to Georg Agricola: "Georg Witzel wrote to me twice, but from an unknown place, so I did not reply."

90. Allen, Ep. 2918:8, 12–14.

91. Witzel in Allen, Ep. 2715:64–66, 2186:4–5,11; Erasmus in ASD 5-3, 303, 301, 313.

92. Gratius, *Fasciculus*, 2: 707.

93. They are 2, 69, and 111 in the most up-to-date list of Witzel's works, published in B. Henze, *Aus Liebe zur Kirche*. She lists 122 works, their editions and locations, in her "Literaturverzeichnis," pp. 306–418.

94. Henze, *Aus Liebe zur Kirche*, 707.

95. *Von der einigkeyt*, B i recto; another notable misinterpretation occurs at B ii verso. Erasmus had written that God would grant prayers, perhaps not "through" (*per*) the intercession of saints, but "for" [*pro*, that is, as a concession to] the saints (ASD 5-3, 305). Witzel explains in the printed marginal summary: "für die: das ist an stad der heiligen" ("for, that is, instead of the saints"). The marginal summaries may, however, have been added by the printer.

96. Elsewhere, however, Witzel explains the meaning of the Greek term as "wenn zwen widdersacher nach verzicht einen gutlichen vertrag miteinander eingehen" ("when two adversaries, after yielding, come to an agreement of good will," in the margin at D ii recto).

97. The report was entitled *Diaphora rei ecclesiasticae/Unterschied zwischen den unainigen Partheyen der strittigen Religionssachen diser bösen Zeit* (the text of Witzel's letter to Ferdinand is in Richter, 159–60); *Apologia* (Leipzig, 1533), 32.

98. *Drey Gesprechbüchlein von der Religion sachen* (Leipzig, 1539), G iii verso.

99. For recent discussions of the colloquy see Henze, *Aus Liebe zur Kirche*, 152–61; Luttenberger, 200–206.

100. CR 3: 621–27 (Brück's letters of Jan 1–3 1539, addressed to Elector Johann Friedrich).

101. Carlewitz' arguments are related at CR 3: 627. Melanchthon disapproved of the proceedings and left, but the others asked to see the Saxon reform proposals.

102. See Henze's examples and evaluation, "Erasmianisch," 167: "Es könnte z. B. vermutet werden, dass er sich um Gegebenheiten, die er von vornherein ablehnt, erst gar nicht die Mühe gemacht hat, Belege zu finden. Umgekehrt hat er vielleicht zu solchen, die ihm am Herzen lagen, besonders eifrig gesucht, um möglichst viele positive Belege zu finden."

103. *Typus Ecclesiae* (Cologne, 1559), A3 verso.

104. The idea that Witzel was an Erasmian was nevertheless kept alive, for example, in the configuration of works in Hermann Conring's edition of Witzel's *Via regia sive de controversis religionis capitibus conciliandis sententia* (Helmstedt, 1651; 2nd ed., 1659), which is printed together with Erasmus' *De concordia*. The connection between Witzel and Erasmus is made also in an edition of the *Via Regia* annotated by Thomas James (London, 1690), whose notes frequently refer the reader to Erasmus' works (e.g., at pp. 754, 756, 758, 764, etc.)

105. *Dialogus* (Nürnberg, 1535), c iv verso.

106. See H. Scheible, *Die Anfänge der reformatorischen Geschichtsschreibung* (Gütersloh, 1966); and, for a recent summary of interpretations and bibliography, B. Gordon, "The Changing Face of Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe," in Gordon, ed., *Protestant History and Identity in Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Aldershot, 1996), 1: 1–22 (reprinted in volume II).

107. See I. Backus, "Erasmus and the Spirituality of the Early Church," in H. Pabel, ed., *Erasmus' Vision of the Church* (Kirksville, 1995); E. Rummel, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament* (Toronto, 1986), esp. 52–74.

108. WA 2: 289 (following Cicero, *De oratore* 1.15.62) and 54, 114.

109. See note 78.

110. On Cassander see P. Bröder, *Georg Cassanders Vermittlungsversuche zwischen Protestanten und Katholiken* (Diss., Marburg, 1931); F. Kantzenbach, *Das Ringen um die Einheit*

der Kirche im Jahrhundert der Reformation (Stuttgart, 1957), 203–29; J. Dolan, *The Influence of Erasmus, Witzel, and Cassander in the Church Ordinances and Reform Proposals of the United Duchies of Cleve During the Middle Decades of the 16th Century* (Münster, 1957); R. van de Schoor, "The Reception of Cassander in the Republic in the Seventeenth Century," in C. Berkvens-Stevelinck et al., eds., *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden, 1997), 101–15.

111. He may have enjoyed the patronage of Adolph Baers, in whose house he lived in Cologne. Adolph was the son of Heinrich Baers, chancellor of the Duke of Jülich-Cleves. See the biographical information Cassander supplies in *Traditionum veteris ecclesiae et sanctorum patrum defensio* (Cologne, 1564), 16. His principal benefactor was his compatriot Cornelius Gualter, who supported him until his death and wrote a moving epitaph for him. See Bartholomaeus Nervius, *Responsio ad calumnias quibus Georgius Cassander in Germanico quodam libello . . . impetitur* (Cologne, 1564): "So far he has not accepted even a penny from the coffers of the church, but was indebted for his living expenses (*victu et amictu*) . . . to the favour of a good man [Gualter]" (B 3 recto).

112. *Opera Cassandri* (Paris, 1616), 1263.

113. He wrote outlines of rhetoric and dialectic (1542, 1544), and published editions of writings by Honorius, Prosper and Hilarius (1552), Vigilius (1555), and collections of hymns and prayers (1556, 1560).

114. Calvin mistakenly ascribed the pamphlet to the French jurist François Balduin, a friend of Cassander's who brought his name to the attention of Catherine of Medici. She invited him to the Colloquy of Poissy, but health reasons kept Cassander from attending. See chap. 5, note 16.

115. The letter is printed at the beginning of Cassander's report, *Opera*, 904–6.

116. It was first published in Cologne, 1577. The following quotations come from the text in the *Opera* (Paris, 1616). On Maximilian's efforts to achieve a compromise see most recently, H. Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise: Peacemakers in Counter-Reformation Vienna* (Cambridge, 1997).

117. For example, in his letters, *Opera*, 1175, 1178, 1191; in *Traditionum defensio*, 153–59; in his report to Ferdinand and Maximilian, *Opera*, 956, 958.

118. *Opera*, 1191.

119. *De officio*, 4–5. Sim. *Traditionum defensio*, 25.

120. *Opera*, 894.

121. *Opera*, 894–95.

122. *Opera*, 896. Similarly, *De officio*, 8.

123. *Opera* 1118, 1123; also 783.

124. *Opera* 1178: *Itaque veritatem, tamquam punctum quoddam inter duo extrema vitiosa constitutam cerno quam exuto omni partium affectu sequi, non est, vir prudentissime, in utramque partem claudicare sed (ut praeclare aliquando ab Erasmo dictum est) inter Scyllam et Charybdim navigare, vel (ut sacrae literae loquuntur), regia via ingredi, neque ad dexteram neque ad sinistram declinare.*

125. Nervius (see note 111) mentions that Cassander briefly studied Hebrew in Bucer's Strasbourg, but never shared Bucer's creed (*Responsio*, C 2 verso).

126. *De officio*, 25; see also 19.

127. *Traditionum defensio*, 22.

128. See pp. 122–25.

129. [P]*rudenter de iis corrigendis dispiciant, modo etiam si res ferat:De officio*, 34.

130. *De officio*, 9, 25.

131. *De officio*, 8.

132. In a letter to Johannes Hessels (1565), *Opera*, 1213: *Neque vero hinc ecclesiae catho-*

licae unitati quicquam decedere puto si aliqua eius membra in quibusdam controversiis, summa fidei capita non attingentibus, inter se dissentiant, modo ne pacis et charitatis vinculum abrumpatur.

133. *Opera*, 9.

134. The loose application of the term "Erasmian" continues to the present day. In a study of Dutch toleration in the sixteenth century, M. Mout comments somewhat sarcastically that modern politicians in her country like to speak of the "Erasmian" spirit of the Dutch, meaning "our happy, broadminded and tolerant society, now and in former times." She notes dryly that "Erasmus did not invent this 'Erasmianism'" ("Limits and Debates," 37). On the (mistaken, or at any rate inaccurate) application of the label to a group of people actively engaged in *Unionspolitik* in the 1540s see C. Augustijn, "Die Religionsgespräche," 49–50.

135. As W. Reinhard put it, religious colloquies had become a ritualized duel, "ein ritualisierter Schlagabtausch" ("Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?" 429).

136. *Evangelische Inquisition wahrer und falscher Religion* (Dillingen, 1573), 166 verso. Maximilian promptly had remaining copies of the book confiscated, but it was reprinted elsewhere and remained in circulation, indicating the popularity of the author's opinion. See H. Louthan, *The Quest for Compromise*, 127–29.

137. Louthan, 30, 38.

Epilogue

1. C. Nauert, *Humanism and the Culture of Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 1995), 195.

2. Spitz, "Humanism in the Reformation," in *Renaissance Studies in Honor of Hans Baron*, ed. A. Molho and J. A. Tedeschi (Dekalb, 1971), 646.

3. Meuthen, "Charakter und Tendenzen des deutschen Humanismus," in *Säkulare Aspekte der Reformationszeit*, ed. H. Angermeier (Munich, 1983), 226.

4. *Ista vel pro Luthero vel in Lutherum excusserunt de pectoribus studiosorum omnem aliarum litterarum curam*, quoted Meuthen, 254, note 146.

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